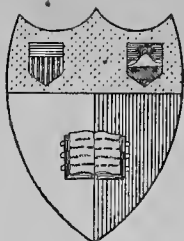


HISTORY
OF
RHODESIA

HOWARD
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A HISTORY OF RHODESIA

A HISTORY OF RHODESIA

COMPILED FROM OFFICIAL SOURCES

BY

HOWARD HENSMAN

WITH A MAP

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*TO THE FOUNDER OF THE NOW FLOURISHING
COLONY OF RHODESIA, The Right Hon. Cecil
J. Rhodes, B.C., THIS BOOK IS, WITH VERY
GREAT RESPECT, DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR.*

P R E F A C E.

IN the following pages will be found the first systematic attempt to record the history of a country that seems destined within the next few years to take a prominent position in that great confederation of States known as the British Empire. It is obvious to all that a book dealing with such contentious topics as the Jameson Raid and the works and methods of Mr Rhodes must provoke a deal of hostile criticism, whatever be the writer's attitude; but let me in self-defence remark, that in all questions treated in the pages of this book it has been my endeavour to present a perfectly impartial statement of the facts of the case. I hold no brief on behalf of, or against, any group or clique either in London or South Africa. Where personal opinions are given, they are such as are held by one who for many years has closely followed events in South Africa, especially in

Rhodesia, and who would wish to see that country become a flourishing British colony, but who has no direct interest in its doing so. With regard to the Jameson Raid, none condemn it more than I do; but I strongly hold that one fault on the part of Mr Rhodes, however great that fault, should not be allowed to outweigh all the benefits he has conferred on the Empire. Mr Rhodes, however, is fully able to defend himself, and needs no outside apologist to intervene between himself and his critics, even if I were disposed to take such an onerous position.

To turn to more peaceful matters. With regard to the identity of Rhodesia with the Ophir of old which is discussed in the first chapter, since those lines were written Dr Carl Peters has returned from his expedition through the country, and, speaking with an antiquarian knowledge of South Africa which is probably unequalled, he gives it as his opinion that Mashonaland is undoubtedly the Ophir of the ancients, and produces very cogent reasons in support of this view.

The book was mainly conceived and written before the outbreak of the war, but with the object of making the volume as complete as possible, chapters dealing with the sieges of Kimberley and Mafeking and the movements of Colonel Plumer's Rhodesian force have been added. The war has not, of course, failed to considerably militate against

the prosperity of Rhodesia. For several months that country was cut off from all telegraphic and railway communication with the south, and connection with the outside world was only possible by means of the Salisbury - Beira railway and telegraph. When the war is over and terms of settlement come to be discussed, signs are already forthcoming that any scheme which neglects the interests of Rhodesia will meet with strenuous opposition in that country.

In conclusion, I would tender my thanks to the British South Africa Company for permission to insert in my book the latest official map of Rhodesia; and I would desire to place on record my great appreciation of the courtesy and kindness I have uniformly received from those in official quarters in London and South Africa, who have by their assistance and advice considerably lightened what would otherwise have been a very difficult task.

HOWARD HENSMAN.

LONDON, *August* 1900.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY HISTORY OF RHODESIA.

	PAGE
Introductory—Traces of an ancient civilisation—The Zimbabwe ruins—Their probable object and extent—Peculiarities of construction—Who were the builders?—Identity with the Phœnicians urged—Was Mashonaland the Ophir of old?—Ruins in Matabeleland—Rhodesia in the seventeenth century—Portuguese invasion—Invasion of the Zulus—The Matabele tribe—Early European explorers	1

CHAPTER II.

MATABELELAND UNDER LOBENGULA.

Death of Umsiligaas—Election of Lobengula as king—His coronation—His appearance and characteristics—A disgusting orgie—Lobengula's task—His attitude towards Europeans—The Tati concessions—The kraal of Gu-Buluwayo—Lobengula's love of moving about—The king as rain-maker—The ceremony of the war-dance—Attendant rites	18
--	----

CHAPTER III.

THE CONCESSION GAINED.

The emissaries of the British South Africa Company—Opposition to them in Gu-Buluwayo—Unfortunate interference of the	
--	--

Aborigines' Protection Society—Its result—Timely arrival of Dr Jameson—Mr Rhodes's far-sighted policy—The concession granted—The charter signed—Its principal features—The raising of a Pioneer corps to proceed to Mashonaland—Reaction against the white men in Matabeleland—Arrival of the Queen's envoys at Gu-Buluwayo—The first races in Matabeleland—South African interest in the new country—The Pioneer column moves forward—Its organisation and equipment—Arrival at the Limpopo—Reviewed by General Methuen—Precautions against attack—The Tuli river reached—Cutting the road—Message from Lobengula—The column ordered to return—Colonel Pennefather's reply . . . 33

CHAPTER IV.

FOUNDING A COLONY.

The advance of the Pioneers—Threatening attitude of the Matabele—Fort Victoria built—The British flag hoisted in Mashonaland—Disbandment of the Pioneer column—Issue of mining licences—The reaction against the country—The hardships of the settlers—Development of Salisbury—The grant of farms—Acquisition of Manicaland—Dispute with the Portuguese—Arrest of the Portuguese officers by Major Forbes—Exploits of Major Forbes's "army"—The dispute patched up—More trouble with the Portuguese—Despatch of a force under Captain Heyman—Defeat of the Portuguese troops—Attack on Sir John Willoughby's boats—Intervention of Lord Salisbury—The trouble over—Difficulty with the Boers—President Kruger surprised 52

CHAPTER V.

WAR WITH THE MATABELE.

The turn of the tide—Grievances against the Chartered Company—Development of Mashonaland—Disbandment of the police—Formation of a volunteer force—Misbehaviour of the Matabele "boys"—Defiance of the Matabele by the Mashonas—Lobengula's vengeance—Intervention of Dr Jameson—

The settlers defied by the Matabele—The Matabele attacked by the police—Misrepresentation of the facts in England—"Read Luke xiv. 31"—Dr Jameson prepares to advance into Matabeleland—Vacillating conduct of Lord Ripon—The financial side of the question—"Mr Rhodes's war"—Formation of an invading force—March towards the Matabeleland frontier—The first casualty to the whites—Bad generalship of the Matabele 70

CHAPTER VI.

WAR WITH THE MATABELE—*continued*.

Crossing the Shangani—Attack on the laager—Severe fighting—Repulse of the cavalry of the whites—Defeat of the Matabele—The column moves forward towards Bulawayo—The death of Captain Williams—Attack on the column near the Bembesi river—Attempt to "rush" the laager—The horses stampeded—Gallantry of Sir John Willoughby and Captain Borrow—Desperate fighting—Retreat of the natives with severe loss—Bulawayo blown up by the Matabele—Bulawayo occupied by the whites—News of the Tuli column—An unfortunate incident—Attack on the Tuli column—Arrival of the Tuli column at Bulawayo—Lobengula's flight towards the Bubi river—Jameson's message to the king—Treachery of the two troopers—Major Forbes sent in pursuit of the king—Hot chase after Lobengula—Despatch of a patrol under Major Wilson—The column attacked—Desperate position of Major Wilson's band—Gallantry of the American scouts 88

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION OF THE WAR.

The massacre of Major Wilson and his men—A band of heroes—The conclusion of the campaign—Retreat of Major Wilson's column along the Shangani river—Hardships on the way—The column attacked—Narrow escape of the horses—Continued fighting—The troubles of the column at an end—Junction with the relief force—Death of Lobengula—Terms

of peace arranged—Disbandment of the British force—The cost of the war—Matabeleland thrown open to settlers—Hostility of the Radical members of the House of Commons to the Chartered Company—The settlement of the country—Building a railway towards Salisbury—Moving a town—Mr Rhodes and the Colonial Office—Visit of Mr Rhodes and Dr Jameson to England—Transference of territory to the Chartered Company—The trans-continental telegraph—A sudden check to the colony's progress 107

· CHAPTER VIII.

THE JAMESON RAID.

The discontent in the Transvaal—Mr Rhodes and the Uitlanders—Mr J. H. Hammond's views—Mr Rhodes's plans—Formation of the Rhodesia Horse Volunteers—The Rhodesian police moved to the Transvaal border—The real intention of this movement—Mr Rhodes and the "Reform Committee"—The "women and children" letter—The position in Johannesburg—The dispute about the flag—Dr Jameson impatient—His start for the Transvaal—Mr Rhodes's attempt to prevent the Raid—The High Commissioner's proclamation—Why the telegraph line to Pretoria was not cut—How the news of Dr Jameson's incursion affected Mr Rhodes—The events of the Raid—The defeat and surrender of Dr Jameson—The reception of the news of the Raid in London—The German Emperor's telegram—Johannesburg disarmed—The Raiders handed over to the British Government—President Kruger and Johannesburg—His threat to shell the town—Arrival of the Raiders in London—Their trial and sentences—The leaders of the "Reform Committee" sentenced to death—The sentence commuted 124

CHAPTER IX.

· THE JAMESON RAID COMMITTEE.

The Raid in Parliament—Alleged complicity of the Colonial Office—Mr Labouchere's attacks—Mr Rhodes prepared to "face the music"—His triumphal progress through Cape

Colony—His arrival in London and his interview with Mr Chamberlain—The inquiry into the Raid by the Cape Parliament—A Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to go into the affair—Mr Rhodes before the committee—His cross-examination by Sir William Harcourt—Evidence as to the future government of Rhodesia—Sir Graham Bowyer's evidence—Evidence of Mr W. Schreiner, Dr Jameson, the Directors of the Chartered Company, and Sir John Willoughby—Dr Harris and Mr Labouchere—A stormy scene—Mr Labouchere compelled to apologise—Mr Hawksley's defiance of the Committee—The Committee's report—Condemnation of the Raid—Mr Labouchere unrepentant—Debate in the House of Commons—Mr Chamberlain's eulogy on Mr Rhodes—Rout of the "Little Englanders"	143
--	-----

CHAPTER X.

OUTBREAK OF THE MATABELE REBELLION.

The rinderpest in Rhodesia—Rumours of discontent among the natives—The causes of the rebellion—The first act of the rising—Murder of settlers—Alarm in Bulawayo—Patrols despatched to the outlying districts—A general insurrection in progress—Atrocities by the natives—Panic in Bulawayo—A terrible night—Construction of a laager at Bulawayo—A night alarm—A gang of cowards—The sufferings of the women—Formation of the Bulawayo Field Force—Other laagers formed in the country	162
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

THE MATABELE REBELLION—*continued.*

Patrol under the Hon. Maurice Gifford leaves Bulawayo—"Fire-side philanthropists"—The defence of Cumming's store—Repulse of the rebels—Relief of Stewart's store—Departure of a patrol for the Insiza district—Fight in the Elibani hills—Fate of the party at Inyati—Fortification of Campbell's store—Arrival of the relief force—Adventures of two troopers—The devotion of Trooper Henderson—The Gwanda

patrol—Another force sets out for the Gwands—Native fear of the telegraph wire—Return march of the Gwanda column—Severe fighting—The column in a tight place—A running fight—Heavy losses of the whites—The rebels at last beaten off—The Shiloh patrol—A skirmish—Arrival of the patrol at Fonseca's farm—Lieutenant Rorke's escape—Heavy fighting—Colonel Gifford wounded—More fighting—Relief of the patrol—Death of Captain Lumsden 180

CHAPTER XII.

THE MATABELE REBELLION—*continued.*

Rebels massing around Bulawayo—Action near the Umgusa river—Three members of the Afrikaner corps murdered—Rebel attack on Napier's farm—Another skirmish at the Umgusa river—Determined efforts to break up the rebel impis—Third fight at the Umgusa—Mr Selous's narrow escape—Bravery of Trooper Baxter—Gallantry of Grey's scouts—Fourth action at the Umgusa—A hot fight—Dashing charge by the Afrikaner corps—The impis forced to retreat—Advance of a relief force from Salisbury—Departure of a large force for the Shangani—Grey's scouts attacked—A splendid charge—The whites' revenge—The Salisbury relief column—Meeting of the two forces—Colonel Spreckley leaves for the Insiza district—Several skirmishes—Bodies of murdered settlers found—Patrol through the Filabusi district—Arrival of Colonel Plumer's relief force at Bulawayo—A night march—Colonel Plumer's first patrol—The Imperial Government takes command—Arrival of Sir Frederik Carrington and other Imperial officers at Bulawayo 198

CHAPTER XIII.

END OF THE MATABELE REBELLION.

Preparations for crushing the rebels—Three patrols sent out—An impi approaching the town—Another fight at the Umgusa—Repulse of the Matabele—The promise of the witch-doctors—Patrol sent to the Shiloh district—Outbreak of the rebellion in Mashonaland—Its causes—The disband-

ment of the Bulawayo Field Force—Departure of Colonel Plumer to attack the rebels—More severe fighting—General Carrington's proclamation of clemency—Campaign in the Matoppos decided upon—Another white victory—Captain Laing attacked—Heavy fighting again in the Matoppos—Captain Beresford in a tight corner—Fighting near the Shangani—An induna captured—His court-martial and execution—Action of the High Commissioner—Colonel Baden-Powell's advance through the Somabula forest—Attack on Wedza's stronghold—Timely arrival of Prince Alexander of Teck—Three days' fighting—The downfall of Wedza—A black outlook for the Chartered Company—Mr Rhodes's pluck 216

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER THE WAR.

Mr Rhodes in the Matoppos—A dangerous errand—His interview with the indunas—Peace decided—"One of the scenes in life that make it worth living"—Progress of the rebellion in Mashonaland—Arrival of Sir Frederick Carrington at Salisbury—Several indunas attacked and defeated—The "butcher's bill"—Rhodesia after the war—The progress of the mining industry—The agricultural possibilities of the country—Famine prices—Stagnation of trade 234

CHAPTER XV.

SIR RICHARD MARTIN'S INQUIRY.

Inquiry into the administration of Rhodesia ordered—The points to be reported upon—Anonymous witnesses—The labour question—Did compulsory labour exist in Rhodesia?—A serious charge—The real facts of the case—Sir R. Martin and the resident magistrate at Bulawayo—The conclusions of Sir Richard Martin—The cattle question—"A fatal mistake"—Mr Homan's monopoly—The causes of the rebellion—Sir R. Martin's conclusions—The local inquiry committee at Bulawayo—The Chartered Company "astounded"—Denial of Sir Richard Martin's charges . . . 252

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PROGRESS OF THE COUNTRY.

- Opening of the railway at Bulawayo—The disputes over the Salisbury line—Friction in Mashonaland—Steady progress at Bulawayo—The administration of the country—Offer of the Chartered Company—Mr Chamberlain's proposals—The scarcity of native labour—Its causes—A suggestion—The "land title" question—Another land question—The wrong way to develop a country—The first gold return—A triumph for the supporters of the country—Mines compelled to shut down—Arrival of the railway at Salisbury 269

CHAPTER XVII.

MR RHODES AND THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

- The trans-continental telegraph and railway lines—Mr Rhodes arrives in England—Asks for a Government guarantee for the extension of the railway—Reply of the Colonial Office—Further proposals to the Government—The guarantee refused—Strange offer by the Cabinet—Mr Rhodes declines the Government offer 287

CHAPTER XVIII

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN RHODESIA.

- Meeting of the British South Africa Company—Two branch railways to be built—The extension of the trans-continental railway—How the money will be raised—A significant comparison—A representative form of government inaugurated in Rhodesia—Differences between the two sections of the Council—The Land Bill—Introduction of customs duties into the country—Indignation of the settlers—An appeal to the High Commissioner—Sir Alfred Milner's chilling reply—Rhodesia to-day—Effect of the Transvaal war on the country—The future of Rhodesia—Will the British South Africa Company lose its charter in 1914? 305

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SIEGE OF KIMBERLEY.

The outbreak of hostilities—Colonel Plumer's force—Rhodesians in Kimberley and Mafeking—The Kimberley garrison—Major Scott-Turner—Christmas in Kimberley—"Long Cecil"—An intermittent bombardment—Arrival of General French	321
---	-----

CHAPTER XX.

EVENTS AT MAFEKING.

General Baden-Powell—An armoured train—Cronje's failure—A hot bombardment—Christmas—Months of monotony—Colonel Plumer's force—A night attack—Boers' final effort—Eloff's failure—The siege raised—The Empire's rejoicings	341
---	-----

APPENDIX I.	370
" II.	371
INDEX	372

4 A HISTORY OF RHODESIA.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY HISTORY OF RHODESIA.

STRETCHING away northwards from the north-western boundary of the South African Republic up to the confines of the Congo Free State is a vast country that, thanks to the energy and far-sightedness of one patriotic Englishman, now forms a part of the British Empire under the name Rhodesia. The area of this great portion of the Central African plateau is about 175,000 square miles, with a population of natives and Europeans that does not fall far short of a million. Its boundaries on the south are the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the Transvaal; on the east is the strip of Portuguese East Africa; on the north is the Congo Free State and German East Africa; while on the west is the Portuguese territory of Angola and German South-West Africa. Rhodesia is divided into two portions by the Zambesi river,

but it is with the southern of these two divisions that this history will chiefly deal. At present Northern Rhodesia is more or less a *terra incognita*, and is in about the same state of development as the southern portion of this country was when the British South Africa Company took possession of it eleven years ago.

As has been already stated, Rhodesia forms part of the great Central African plateau, and it may therefore be said to consist, geographically speaking, of one broad swelling plain, which is cut up and intersected by numerous rivers and streams. This plain, however, gives way in places to rocky mountains and valleys, some of the latter being of great beauty; while at the famous Victoria Falls, in the west of the country, it would seem as though the plateau itself had been rent in twain by some gigantic convulsion of nature.

Southern Rhodesia is divided into two great provinces—Mashonaland and Matabeleland—both of which are in the main well suited for European colonisation, and which are without doubt destined to play an important part in the future history of the empire to which they belong. It was the former province that was the first to attract the attention of prospectors and settlers, but it has been Matabeleland that has, thanks chiefly to the greater facilities in the way of transport and suchlike that it has possessed, assumed the greater importance to-day; though, so soon as Mashonaland receives the same aids to its development, there is no reason to suppose that it will be one whit behind Matabeleland either in mineral

wealth or agricultural value, the two great factors in the rapid opening up of a colony.

The history of Rhodesia may be said to begin really with the granting of the charter to the British South Africa Company in October 1889, and it is doubtful whether any country ever had so eventful a history during the first ten years of its national life as Rhodesia has had. Prior to 1889 but little was known of the country beyond the Limpopo or Crocodile river, though explorers like Carl Mauch and Thomas Baines, and hunters of the stamp of F. C. Selous, had brought back reports of the healthy uplands and the abundance of gold and other metals in the great territory to the north; but, save for a very few adventurous spirits, the white population preferred to remain in Cape Colony, Natal, and the two Dutch Republics.

Rhodesia, though, has a history dating far back into the mists of antiquity, and was doubtless a flourishing semi-civilised colony long before the dawn of the Christian era. It is a history, moreover, that forms a perfect enigma to those who would fathom it. Scattered over the whole of the country are mystic ruins of vast extent that, like the pyramids of northern Africa, have defied the ravages of time, and there they remain to-day, ruins, it is true, but ruins of such magnitude and solidity that one feels a strong admiration for the people, whosoever they might have been, that could leave behind them such mighty monuments of their skill and industry. While we can guess with some degree of accuracy at the period when these buildings were erected, and form good ideas of the

objects for which they were intended, it can only be little more than conjecture when we come to consider what people it was that erected them or whence they came.

It has been said that these traces of an ancient civilisation—for it is impossible to believe that savage races erected them—extend extensively over Rhodesia ; but the chief of them, and those to which most attention has been paid, are situated round Zimbabwe in Mashonaland, about fourteen miles from Victoria, and along the Lundi and Sabi rivers, and farther north, in the Mazoe valley. Matabeleland is freer from them, but the builders evidently traversed the country, for in the south-west, near the Tati and Shashi rivers, we again find these buildings, while there is a very fine specimen of their workmanship at Mombo, between Bulawayo and Gwelo. Having pointed out the way in which these ruins are scattered about, we now come to the consideration of the buildings themselves. To gain a clear idea of their nature and extent, those around Zimbabwe offer the best facilities, and it may be observed that the ruins are all of so similar a nature that while discussing one we are in the main discussing them all.

The primary object of the erection of the whole of these structures throughout the entire country seems undoubtedly to be that of fortresses to protect the inhabitants from the inroads of other dwellers in the land who were presumably physically stronger and more numerous than the builders. Probably those against whom these walls were raised were the original owners of the soil, and those who entered the

country and sheltered themselves behind these massive bulwarks did so to exploit the gold-reefs which they knew were to be found in the country.

While it may be safely assumed, therefore, that one of the objects of these buildings was that of protection, it seems none the less certain that they were also constructed for religious purposes, and therefore they may be said to have acted at once as citadels and temples. What the religion was none can say, but there would seem to be signs that it was a form of sun-worship, and on this all who have examined the ruins appear to be agreed, and this fact gives us a clue to the race that built them. Sun-worship was one of the earliest forms of religion adopted by the Semitic races, and therefore it seems but a logical deduction to infer that these people were at least of Semitic descent.

At Zimbabwe the ruins may be conveniently divided into three sections. First, there is a large circular ruin which stands in a valley at the foot of a hill; next, on the top of this hill is a huge building that evidently acted as an acropolis for the surrounding city, which now forms a huge mass of ruins between the top of the hill and the circular building already referred to. This mass forms the third section of the ruins. The people who built these possessed in a marked degree a knowledge of architecture and geometry, but it is as builders, pure and simple, that they appear to the best advantage. The walls consist of blocks of the hard granite that exists in abundance in Rhodesia, and these blocks, with what labour one can well imagine, were all hewn,

before being used, into a uniform size, about twice that of ordinary bricks,—a size most convenient to handle, and one that seems to point to the fact that the knowledge of cranes and other devices for the raising of weights among these builders was elementary when compared with that displayed by the builders of the Pyramids. These blocks were placed upon each other in much the same manner that the modern bricklayer employs, but without the use of mortar or cement of any kind. The walls in places are no less than sixteen feet thick and thirty feet high, while the courses of the blocks are so regular as to excite wonder in the breasts of all who behold them. Here and there in the walls a long slab of granite runs right through from exterior to interior to give added solidity, and to these, together with the care employed in the placing of the blocks and the absence of mortar that has prevented the accumulation of moss or lichen, is to be attributed the good state of preservation in which the buildings remain to-day. The absence of cement from the walls, however, must not be taken to indicate that the builders were ignorant of its use, for several of the floors that were laid down in the different buildings were of a firm hard cement. The walls generally taper towards the top, and this again has served to preserve them from collapse.

There are many instances in the form of construction adopted to show that they were built in accordance with some form of religion, and that that religion included sun-worship. For example, the parts of the walls that face the rising sun were

always those that had the greatest care bestowed upon their construction, while one and all bear a peculiar form of ornamentation that is wanting on those portions that are away from the course of the sun. This ornamentation is usually in the form known as the "herring-bone" pattern, thin slabs of granite having been inserted on their edges at an angle of 45° to the ordinary courses. A course of this is followed by a similar one, in which the slabs run in the contrary direction, thus giving the appearance of a chevron placed on its side. The chevron proper is also used as a decoration in places, but the favourite form of ornamentation is that just described, and almost every ruin yet examined bears traces of this ornamentation. The walls facing the rising sun, too, are nearly always thicker and higher than the rest, while greater care has been taken to ensure the regularity of the courses. Another curious point to be noted is that, almost without exception, the entrance, or at least the chief one, is facing the north, or away from the sun.

Once the walls are passed, the interiors form a perfect labyrinth of narrow passages, along which in places two persons cannot walk abreast, and which are commanded by positions for archers, using the term advisedly, that would have made it next to impossible for a hostile force to have passed through without being annihilated. The passages all seem to tend towards the centre of the building, which was usually circular or elliptical, where in all probability stood the sacred place, and possibly the altar on which sacrifices were offered. Of the rites that

were performed here, there is now nothing to show, but it seems certain that sacrifices of one kind or another formed part of them. On the walls surrounding this sacred enclosure huge monoliths of granite were erected at equal distances, and these monoliths are, so far as can be judged, of a similar character to those to be seen at Stonehenge in Wiltshire, as well as in other parts of Northern Europe. These lead to the thought that the secret of Stonehenge is possibly also that of Mashonaland's ancient civilisation.

In addition to their use as temples and fortresses, these buildings were also used to contain furnaces for the retorting and smelting of the gold that was won from the neighbouring mines,—for wherever these ruins are, old gold-workings are to be found in the immediate vicinity. In fact, these circular buildings, with their attendant walls and citadels, seem to have enclosed the whole of the dwelling-places of this strange race in much the same fashion as the town walls did the cities of medieval Europe.

To return to the sacred enclosures, that at Zimbabwe, which is the largest in the country, contained, according to Mr J. D. Bent, who made long and careful excavations here in 1891, two round towers in the shape of gigantic sugar-loaves, the highest of which stood about thirty-five feet, and the use of these is unknown. They were solid, and that they were used for religious purposes seems to be the only possible inference. That they were monuments raised over the tombs of departed chiefs or priests, as had previously been urged, was disproved by Mr Bent, who carefully searched the ground at

their base for evidence of this character, but could not find any.

As before mentioned, all these ruins seem to have been very strongly fortified, the protections reaching the point of redundancy; and this points unmistakably to the fact that the occupants lived in constant fear of attack, and that, to quote Mr Bent's words, they "lived like a garrison in the heart of an enemy's country." Here, then, we have a people well skilled in constructive art, deeply religious, and of probably a quiet and inoffensive description, having wandered on to the plains of Rhodesia to dwell among the fierce tribes that evidently overran the country then as later, to search for the precious metals that they knew to lie beneath the ground. That they were much inferior to the aborigines in fighting power we know from the fact that they took such pains to make their dwelling-places impregnable to attack. What race can they have been? There is one answer to this question, which has been urged before, and which certainly seems to fit in with the facts that we know about them better than any other theory that has yet been advanced, and that is, that these people were the Phœnicians. An examination of the evidence at our disposal seems to be strongly in favour of this assumption. That the Phœnicians were a great colonising nation we know from the Old Testament, and the race that strayed so far from its native land as Cornwall and the Baltic might surely have crossed the equator and settled in Mashonaland. Again, most historians and authorities on Phœnicia are agreed upon the fact that it was probable in

the extreme that this race had a settlement in the mysterious land of Ophir, a land "teeming with gold and precious stones." Could that Ophir have been the country that we to-day call Mashonaland? This is one of the most interesting questions that occurs to students of African history, and the reply to it seems to be that, while not definitely asserting that Ophir and Mashonaland are synonymous, yet the inferences are strongly in that direction, and several recent writers and speakers on this subject have urged the identity of Rhodesia with the Ophir of old.

Another fact that seems to connect Mashonaland with the Phœnicians is the amount of mining skill that was displayed by these builders. The Phœnicians are universally known to have been expert miners, as the tin mines of Cornwall bear witness, and those who dug out the gold-ore in Mashonaland were assuredly possessed of this skill in mining in a large degree. They were not content to work merely on the outcrops of the reefs, but followed them down with considerable skill: some of the old workings existing in Rhodesia to-day are monuments to their industry and pertinacity. In the Hartley district, for instance, there is one shaft that was sunk by these ancient workers to a depth of eighty feet.

It has long been thought that India represented the ancient Ophir, but it seems as though in the light of recent discoveries it must give place to Rhodesia. Whether this be so or not,—and, after all, the matter is of but secondary importance,—the whole of the evidence goes to show that it was either the Phœnicians or a nation closely allied to them that built

these great structures. The presumed period during which they were erected, 1100 B.C., the skill shown in their construction, the manner in which the neighbouring mines were worked, and the form of religion that the workers followed, all point strongly in that direction. As another link in the chain that seems to connect Phœnicia with the ruins of Rhodesia, it may be mentioned that some time ago an ingot of tin of undoubted Phœnician origin was found in Cornwall of a peculiar shape,—something like the ground-plan of the modern catamaran or double canoe; and a mould of precisely the same shape has been brought to light in the Zimbabwe ruins.

Turning from Mashonaland to Matabeleland, we find, as has already been said, that the ruins are not nearly so numerous, and a few that do exist obviously belong to some subsequent, though still remote, period. At Mombo, however, ruins have been discovered which, while inferior in size to those at Zimbabwe and Martendela, are much superior to them in construction and ornamentation. This ruin consists of a number of buildings, the central one of which corresponds closely with the circular ruin at Zimbabwe, while, as in almost every other case, this building is protected by walls and fortifications of the most solid description. Dr Schlichter, the well-known Rhodesian antiquary, at a recent meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, declared that the central building was, looked at from either an architectural or an astronomical point of view, the most interesting ruin yet discovered south of the equator. Unfortunately, the natives have next to no traditions

about these ruins, and this is somewhat strange, for savage races are, as a rule, prolific in legends. The natives south of the Zambesi, however, are an exception to this rule, for they have scarcely any legends at all. Yet they have one in connection with the Zimbabwe ruins that is worthy of note. They state that the buildings were erected by white men, but that black men poisoned the water, and the white men all died. This tradition is common for some distance round about Zimbabwe.

A curious fact in connection with these most mysterious buildings is that where the walls have fallen,—and especially is this fact to be noted at Zimbabwe,—the stones of which they were composed have entirely vanished, and are not to be found in the neighbourhood; and this leads up to another question, Why did the inhabitants of these mighty buildings quit them, and where did they go? We do not know whether the tradition of the natives related above is to be accepted, or whether the savage inhabitants ultimately triumphed over the builders and put them to the sword; or whether they returned to their own country, wherever that land may have been. Another supposition that might be urged is, that in course of time they lost their fear of the natives and intermarried with them, and so disappeared as a separate race, in the same manner as the Normans intermarried with the Saxons after the Conquest. In support of this latter theory, we have the testimony of several explorers to the effect that there are to-day tribes inhabiting northern Mashonaland of a much lighter complexion than the remainder, and who seem

to belong to an altogether higher type. Mr F. C. Selous, at the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society previously referred to, gave it as his opinion that the extraction of gold in Mashonaland was not stopped by a cataclysm in which the original workers were overwhelmed by the aborigines, but that it ceased only with the Zulu invasion of the present century. This, however, does not seem so probable as the other suppositions noted above. Mr Selous does not, of course, wish to convey the idea that the direct descendants of the Phœnicians, if it were they, were present in Mashonaland at the opening of this century and were working the gold, but rather that some tribes, whose ancestors maybe had learned the secret of mining from these ancient immigrants, were working the mines—and in this possibly he is right. But it would seem more probable that the ancient miners either returned to their own country, were massacred by the aborigines, or have intermarried with them until all trace of them as an independent race has been lost.

That there has been a race inhabiting Rhodesia for its gold since the building of the Zimbabwe and other ruins is abundantly clear, for they have left many traces behind them in the shape of ruins, which are of a much poorer and less solid description than those contemporary with the ruins of Zimbabwe and Martendela, with which they must not be confounded. These later ruins are to be found in Mangwendi's and Makoni's countries, and were evidently used in connection with mining. So much for the ancient civilisation of Rhodesia.

There is now a break of many centuries in the his-

tory of the country, of which we hear very little until about the middle of the seventeenth century, when the Portuguese settlers around the mouth of the Zambesi forced their way into the interior to what was known as the great empire of Monomatapa, in which a tribe called the Karanga had ruled paramount for centuries. The Portuguese made some efforts to settle in this country, but did not succeed. Attempts were made to conquer the natives, but it was beyond the invaders' powers, so they perforce had to be content with establishing some trading stations in a half-hearted sort of way on the banks of the Zambesi. These, however, soon dwindled away, some of the store-keepers died, some were murdered by the natives, while a good many lost heart and returned to their fellow-countrymen on the coast, none going to take their places. Contact with these Portuguese traders had in some measure tended to civilise the natives, but with the withdrawal of the traders they once more lapsed into barbarism pure and simple.

At this time the inhabitants of the vast country known now as Rhodesia were the Mashonas and Makalakas, who, as African aboriginal tribes go, were quiet and inoffensive. They were extremely unwarlike, but were very clever workers in iron, which they obtained in quantities from the bases of some of their mountains, and deft in weaving the coarse grass that grew around them into mats for coverings; but it was as cattle-raisers that they excelled. After the departure of the Portuguese they lived on, quietly and in peace, until about 1840, when a terrible black horde swept across the country, carrying death and

desolation for all who opposed it, and causing the timorous owners of the soil to flee to the hills and other inaccessible spots, in much the same fashion as the Saxon and Danish freebooters drove the ancient Britons into the rocky fastnesses of Wales. This invading force was a branch of the terrible and war-like Zulu tribe under the leadership of Umsiligaas, a cruel and despotic chief, and the tribe under him soon became famous as the Matabele. The Zulus had for ages occupied the whole of the country where the Transvaal and the Orange Free State are now situated. This tribe was constantly fighting, or "washing their spears," as they euphemistically termed it, but when the Boers took the field against them they found that they had met more than their match. Their heroic spear-charges were of but little avail with opponents that contented themselves with lying behind rocks and pouring volleys of rifle-fire into them, while their shields of skins, too, were of but small avail in stopping the bullets. They therefore retreated into the north of the Republic and settled on the shores of the Limpopo river, but they were soon at war again.

This time it was among themselves, the tribe being split into rival factions under the leadership of the despotic Chaka, who had long been the supreme chief, and Umsiligaas. The feud lasted for some time, many bloody fights taking place; but it was at last terminated by the malcontents under Umsiligaas setting off across the Limpopo and pouring over the plains of the country that was afterwards named after them. The Mashona and Makalala tribes could offer but little resistance to these redoubtable warriors, and

were driven before them like chaff before the wind. The Matabele at length settled down beyond the Matoppos hills, and such of the original inhabitants as escaped the general massacres that took place were driven to seek refuge in the mountains near the Zambesi, where they built their villages on the top of inaccessible crags, and dwelt in constant fear of their bloodthirsty neighbours until the arrival of the British ten years ago, and the subsequent crushing of the Matabele power, when they were once more able to come down to the plains and work in peace and without going in daily dread of extermination at the hands of their conquerors.

The Matabele, when they were not fighting, were great cattle-raisers, and in this the principal wealth of their nation consisted. A man was respected for the number of Mashonas he had killed and the number of bullocks he possessed, and they found that the plains of Matabeleland were well suited for grazing their cattle. The nation numbered about 200,000 souls, and was divided into *impis* or regiments. These military divisions numbered four, and to each regiment on its formation was assigned a separate kraal or enclosure, which formed their only semblance to a town or village. The kraals were always situated where there was an abundance of wood for fuel and other purposes, and pasture-land for their cattle, together with a plentiful supply of water. As the pasturage became worn out, or was found too small owing to the increase of cattle either by breeding or by plunder, the tribe moved their kraal to another part of the country, where they

would perhaps dwell for ten years or so, until that in its turn became unsuitable, and then another "trek" would be made. The impi, however, still kept its distinctive name, which was bestowed on the kraal; and so it often happens that we find the early explorers in conflict as to the exact situation of the various kraals, for they do not seem to have been aware of this constant moving about on the part of the impis. The three chief kraals of the Matabele nation were the Inyati, the Emhlangen, and the Gu-Buluwayo.

Here the impis dwelt, slaying and massacring as was their wont for some twenty-four or twenty-five years without the interference of white men, until the rumoured existence of gold in large quantities attracted the attention of several European explorers, such as Nelson, a Swede, who first visited the country in 1869, and shortly afterwards became the manager of the Tati Gold Mines; Hartley, who discovered the hills in Mashonaland which now bear his name; and Mauch, the celebrated German mineralogist, who explored Matabeleland in 1864, and discovered the Tati goldfields. These are but a few of the men who were attracted by the great possibilities of the plateaus between the Limpopo and Zambesi rivers. Hunters, too, like Mr F. C. Selous, began to frequent these well-watered plains in search of the herds of elephants and other big game which abounded, and soon reports of the great mineral wealth and the healthy climate of the land to the north began to filter down to Cape Colony, Natal, the Free State, and other civilised parts, and so through to Europe.

CHAPTER II.

MATABELELAND UNDER LOBENGULA.

ABOUT the year 1869 Umsiligaas, the first king of the Matabele nation, died, and a difficulty at once arose about his successor. The heir to the throne was Kuruman, son of Umsiligaas by the royal wife; but this young chief was mysteriously missing, and all efforts to find him proved unavailing. The leading *indunas*, or chiefs, therefore assembled together to discuss the question of the succession, and when it was evident that Kuruman could not be traced, it was decided to offer the crown to Lobengula, a son of Umsiligaas by an inferior wife, and who had proved himself to be brave in battle and cunning in the council. This was accordingly done. A section of the nation, however, was opposed to Lobengula, and several impis, stirred up in some instances by other members of the royal family who wished to have the crown for themselves, refused to accept any king but Kuruman. It was easy to see, therefore, that there was but one way to decide the question,—the arbitrament of the assegai; and consequently a fearful battle was fought between the

two opposing parties, with the result that Lobengula and the impis supporting him gained the victory, and the rebels were crushed,—so much so, that they consented to Lobengula becoming king without further demur. Possibly his bravery in the field on this occasion as much as anything led to his unanimous election; for the Matabele, like most other primitive nations, gauged a man's capabilities by the courage he displayed in battle.

The crowning of Lobengula was signalled by great feasting and rejoicings, about 10,000 warriors being present, each wearing his full war costume. This costume was rather an elaborate one for an African tribe, and consisted, first of all, of a helmet something of the same shape as the head-dress worn by the Highland regiments in the British army, only composed in this case of black ostrich-feather plumes. Over their shoulders they wore a short cape composed of the same plumes, and this had the effect of making them seem much broader-shouldered than they really were. Around their loins they wore a kilt made of tiger-cat and other skins, ornamented with the tails of white cattle. They also wore similar tails on their arms, while round their ankles they had rings of brass and other metal. This completed the war-dress of a Matabele warrior. His weapons consisted of one or more long spears for throwing, like the javelin of old, and the terrible short stabbing-spear or assegai, which was the principal weapon of the Zulu nation, and which had caused them to be dreaded from the Cape of Good Hope to the Zambesi. For defence they carried a large oval

shield of ox-hide, either black, white, red, or speckled, according to the impi they belonged to, each impi having its distinctive shield.

Physically, Lobengula was tall, standing six feet high, though as he grew older he got so immensely fat that he did not seem so tall as he really was. His bearing was proud and haughty, making him a typical king of a savage race. His features were large and coarse to a degree, while he habitually wore a look of cunning intermingled with cruelty, —though when he allowed himself to smile his expression was at once changed, and his face appeared to be pleasant and good-tempered. He had an excellent memory, being able to recollect conversations and incidents years after they occurred; while he seemed to know intuitively how to govern his country and its turbulent population.

The coronation ceremonies took place at a kraal called Inthlathangela, one of the principal military towns in the country. There the nation assembled in the form of a large semicircle, and having gone through the national war-dance, declared their willingness to fight for Lobengula, whom they hailed as king, and to die in his service. A great number of cattle were then slaughtered to provide a feast for the hungry population, and sacrifices of the choicest meat were offered to the Mlimo, or great Spirit, and to the dead Umsiligaas. Great quantities of native beer were also consumed, until, what with the excitement of the dance, the gorge on the beef, and the effects of the beer, the soldiers became extremely ferocious and more like demons

than mere creatures of flesh and blood. Numerous awful scenes followed. One incident is currently quoted by the Matabele as having taken place, and those who are best acquainted with the character of the race are perfectly able to credit it. It is said that, in order to test their courage, Lobengula caused a number of the young soldiers to lay down their arms and shields, and this having been done, he had a bull turned loose amongst them, and ordered them, unarmed as they were, to seize it and eat it where it stood. So soon as they received this order the young men sprang on the animal like so many beasts of prey, and worried and tore it with their hands and teeth in a manner horrible to think of, so that in a short time nothing was left but the horns and the bones. It was such monsters as these who received the sympathy of a certain badly informed, though doubtless well-meaning, section of the English community who took up the cudgels on behalf of the poor, innocent, downtrodden natives during the Matabele war, and denounced the English settlers as bloodthirsty monsters for using Maxim guns against them.

Lobengula on succeeding to the throne was confronted with a very difficult task. Having been elected by the people, and not having come to the throne by right of descent, he had not, and could never hope to have, the same despotic power with which his father had ruled, and yet he realised as well as anybody could have done that the slightest show of weakness on his part would mean his speedy deposition, if not, indeed, his death,—for the Mata-

bele despised timidity, and mercy was thrown away on them. They held human life in supreme contempt. However, he soon showed that he was well fitted for his task. He saw that when he came to the throne his power was likely to be seriously threatened through the way in which he had gained it, and therefore he resolved on getting rid of such of the older indunas as proved to be in any way antagonistic to him. This he quickly did by having them one by one executed for witchcraft and on other similar pretences, until at length he was free from opposition in the council, and his indunas were one and all warriors who were devoted to him. There is a simple directness about this mode of procedure that seems to render the diplomatic methods of Western nations painfully tedious.

Lobengula all through his reign showed that, while perhaps not an admirer of Europeans, yet he was at least tolerant of them. Such as appeared before him were always assured of fair treatment, and this continued down to the time of the arrival of the first emissaries of the Chartered Company at his kraal. In the early years of his reign he did not have much contact with white men, but later there came a few missionaries, and these were followed by hunters and explorers, and then came prospectors and concession-seekers. These last entered Matabeleland and Mashonaland in great numbers in the years 1887 and 1888, after the great discovery of gold on the Rand, within the boundaries of the South African Republic. Traders also came

and settled in Matabeleland about this time, and all found a tolerant friend in Lobengula, who showed himself willing, so far as the means at his command would permit, to protect them from the inroads of his subjects, and to punish those whom he found guilty.

Prior to 1889 the chief concession that had been granted to gold-seekers by Lobengula was one about 1870 to Sir John Swinburne, to whom was granted what afterwards came to be known as the Tati Concession. This concession consisted of the right to search for gold and other minerals on a tract of land situated in the extreme south-west of the country between the Shashi and Ramaquiban rivers, and here was started the first systematic mining operations that had taken place in Matabeleland since the days of the ancients. The Tati Concessions, however, it should be remembered, do not form part of the territory controlled by the British South Africa Company, being under the direct administration of the Government of Cape Colony.

It has been said that the concession to Sir John Swinburne was granted about the year 1870, and that mining operations then commenced, but it should also be stated that, owing chiefly to the unhealthy climate that prevails at times in this low-lying district, and inroads from impis of Matabele, it is only during the last ten years or so that any real development work has been able to be done on the property.

The principal kraal of Lobengula was called Gu-Buluwayo, a name which translated means "the

place of slaughter,"—a sinister appellation, but one which well represents its character, for under the rule of the Matabele king it was undeniably a place of slaughter, and never a week passed without some members of the tribe being executed, either for witchcraft, which was the favourite charge, or for small sins of omission or commission. This kraal was the largest and the most important in the country, and a description of it may well be given here. It was situated on the high and healthy plateau between the upper courses of the Kahmi and the Umgusa rivers to the north of the Matoppo Hills, on the site where the prosperous town of Bulawayo, a corruption of Gu-Buluwayo, now stands. The town or kraal was about a mile in circumference, and was surrounded with a high and well-built palisade of wood. Inside this palisade were situated the huts of the inhabitants, and near these was another strongly-built barricade similar to the outer one, but not so high, and here the cattle were kept at night. A large inside space was reserved for a parade-ground, where the annual war-dance and other great public ceremonies took place, when the tribe was present in large numbers. Here was the royal hut, and another small kraal where the sacred goats were kept, and into which it was death for any one to enter but the king without special permission, which was rarely given. There were also here separate huts for such of Lobengula's wives as might be on a visit to him, for they did not all dwell with him constantly. At the entrance to the kraal were two large heaps of horns and other refuse, the re-

mains of bullocks which had been killed at different times, and these in the hot weather sent up an odour that can be far better imagined than described. Here also were always to be found a large number of soldiers, messengers, and others awaiting the king, or to do his service.

So far all the kraals in the country varied only in point of size, and one description fits the whole; but Gu-Buluwayo could boast of an erection that was the first of its kind in Rhodesia. This was a house of brick, which had been built for Lobengula by a white sailor named Halyott, but which the king, for some reason or another, was very shy of, and did not live in, preferring to sleep in his waggon, which stood close at hand. A waggon-shed had also been provided to keep the king's carts from the inclemency of the weather, and this, too, was a novelty for a Zulu kraal. In the house referred to were many prints and paintings of more or less value which the king had accumulated; and here was placed the large, almost life-size, picture of the Queen which her Majesty sent to him by his envoys when they visited London in 1889. Lobengula, it may be mentioned, entertained a warm feeling of respect for the "Great White Queen," as he was wont to term her; but it is probable that deep down in his heart he had a feeling of contempt for a nation that suffered itself to be ruled by a woman, for he had strong opinions on the proper sphere of the fair sex.

The king, however, did not dwell exclusively in this one kraal, but, especially in his young days, was

fond of roaming about the country in an aimless manner that must have been at times extremely annoying to his followers, supposing them to have been allowed to have any independent feelings, which is more than doubtful. Lobengula would suddenly take it into his head to visit a certain portion of his dominions, and straightway orders would be given for the kraal to put itself in motion for the journey, and off they would set at the earliest possible moment after the command had been given.

None knew where they were bound for, even Lobengula being ignorant of the spot that he would pitch upon for a camp; but once he had selected the site, his followers would commence to build a new kraal—no light task, even with the amount of labour at command, seeing the number that the kraal would have to contain. Here the king would dwell for some time, months maybe, until another fit of restlessness would seize him, and he would once more set off across the veldt. As he got older and began to be troubled with gout, the king lost a good deal of this fondness for roaming about, and was content to stay at Gu-Buluwayo.

While nominally Lobengula ruled over the whole of the country of Matabeleland, yet the part containing the large kraals, and which formed the real Matabele country, may be said to have been comprised, roughly speaking, in a circle with a radius of about sixty miles from Gu-Buluwayo. Outside this limit the rule of Lobengula was of little more than a passive description. Situated on the boundaries of this circle were outlying kraals, at which all white

men were stopped on entering the country, and detained until permission was received from the king for them to go forward. The principal of these outposts was the kraal known as "Minjama's," which was situated on the road from Tati to Gubuluwayo, the route usually taken by those entering Matabeleland from the south. Runners were sent forward from this kraal to Lobengula whenever any whites arrived there, to obtain his sanction to their going forward, and this was but rarely refused.

The Matabele thus lived on, fighting and slaying as was their wont, until the year 1889, when the real history of Rhodesia may be said to commence. This year had been a very bad one for fever, especially at Tati, where at one time every white man employed had been down with fever at once, thus causing a total stoppage of all mining work, and the mortality throughout the country had been high. To add to this discomfort, it was also a very dry year: little rain had fallen, the pasturage was completely parched up, and cattle were dying in all directions. Lobengula, as king of the Matabele, was supposed to have the power of making rain, and this was one of his greatest and most useful prerogatives, although, probably, none knew better than the wily old savage himself the hollowness of such pretence. However, his people believed in his rain-making power, and he was far too astute to undeceive them. When this drought continued, therefore, urgent messages reached the king from different parts of the country asking him to hasten the rain, otherwise all the cattle would die. When he

received these messages the king, who was really a very good weather-prophet, went to the door of his quarters and scanned the skies to see what the chance of rain was. There were no indications of the break-up of the fine weather, however, and therefore Lobengula turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his subjects, with whom he affected to be very displeased. The prayers for rain increased in force each day as the drought became more and more severe, and several impis arrived at Gu-Buluwayo to beg for rain in person.

At last Lobengula saw that rain was really coming, so he gave it out that he would keep his people without the desired rain no longer, and calling his witch-doctors together, he prepared to bring about the downpour. For this he overhauled his medicine-waggons, which followed him wherever he went, until he obtained the desired ingredients for weaving the spell. What all these consisted of are not known, but certain dried roots, and parts of the crocodile and other animals, entered into the concoction, together with several other unsavoury productions. When these had been collected the king retired to the sacred goat-kraal accompanied by the witch-doctors, and there performed several incantations over a huge pot which had been placed on a fire, and into which had been poured the mixture before alluded to. Then at last the rain came down, when the acute old king appeared in public once more, to receive the grateful thanks of an admiring nation. During the time that the charm was being worked the natives around

the kraal maintained an absolute silence, for fear of frightening away the approaching rain.

The great event of the Matabele year was the war-dance that has been already mentioned, and a description of this will not be out of place. The dance lasted a week, and contained a good deal that closely resembled the rites practised by the ancient Jews. The festival was generally held in February, and preparations for it were made weeks beforehand. These preparations, by the way, chiefly consisted of the manufacture of an enormous supply of native beer. This beer was manufactured at the different kraals throughout the country, and was then sent forward to Gu-Buluwayo or wherever else the dance was to be held, by native girls, who walked for long distances in Indian file, each with a calabash of beer on her head. Some curious facts in connection with the war-dance are to be noted. For example, during the week it was in progress Lobengula was no longer king, he having temporarily to relinquish his office to Umshlaba, the regent; white men were neither permitted to enter nor leave the country during the time that the dance was being performed; and another custom that was rigorously enforced was that nothing of a red colour, which in the Matabele mind symbolised blood, was to be worn or displayed, and no bloodshed or violence of any kind was permitted. The impis selected by the king to take part in the ceremony would arrive outside the kraal a day or two before the time for the opening of the dance, and would take up the positions assigned to them in the temporary camps that had been prepared. On the morning of

the dance the impis marched one by one on to the parade-ground, each surrounded by their women and girls, who shouted the praises of their individual warriors until the noise was wellnigh deafening. The king took up his position in the centre of the line, and the impis were drawn up in crescent-shaped formation in front of him, the warriors being three or four deep. The numbers taking part in the dance differed considerably from year to year. On occasions it is said that as many as 20,000 men were assembled before the king, but the usual number was from 8000 to 10,000. Each soldier before being allowed to take part in the dance had to be "purified" by the witch-doctors, who performed various mystic rites, and sprinkled them with "medicine."

The dance opened with the royal salute, each impi stamping the ground furiously with their feet and crying out the royal welcome, "*Kumalo!*" The soldiers wore their war regalia as before described, and in addition to their spears also bore a short stave, called a "dancing-stick," with which they beat time on their shields. After the salute the leading witch-doctor inspected the impis, and then made a stirring speech to them about their victories in the past, while exhorting them to fight bravely in the future. This harangue had the effect of working up the soldiers into something little short of a frenzy of excitement. The dance proper then took place, the whole line swaying to and fro, singing a weird but not unmelodious chant, and beating time with their sticks. Now and again an old warrior would spring forward from the ranks, and while performing

a series of high leaps in the air, would recount, with many a flowery figure of speech, his achievements in battle, while the line thundered its applause. This done, and a few more incantations performed by the small army of witch-doctors present, Lobengula would himself dance before the gratified onlookers. This effort of the king cannot be called a graceful one by any means, for it merely consisted of his slowly lifting first one leg from the ground and then the other, with the occasional introduction of a few awkward movements that are difficult to explain on paper. His costume while performing this "dance" was similar to that worn by his soldiers, only of better quality, while around him he wore a kilt of monkey-skins, the distinguishing badge of royalty. A furious charge forward by the whole line with lowered assegais followed the *pas de seul* of the king, the men pulling themselves up sharply when within a few feet of Lobengula and his guests.

The next event was the releasing of the sacred black cattle from their kraal, which were then turned loose on the open veldt. They were not allowed their freedom for long, however, for the young soldiers dropped their assegais and shields and ran after the cattle at full speed, when, having headed them off, they would drive them back in triumph to their kraal.

The most interesting part of the affair was still to come, and that was the "casting of the spear" by Lobengula. For this ceremony the king was escorted by the youngest impi present to the gates of the kraal overlooking the open veldt, and there taking an

assegai in his hand, he cast it in the direction that he thought it likely he should send his soldiers to fight during the ensuing year. This done, the young soldiers rushed forward, screaming and shouting with delight, and, reaching the place where the assegai had fallen, they stabbed the ground furiously with their spears in token of their willingness to fight and die for their king. After some more ceremonies of a similar type the impis were dismissed about evening and sent to their camps, whither they went dancing and singing in demoniacal exultation.

On the following day large numbers of cattle were slaughtered by the king's orders, and the meat was distributed among the eager soldiers. In a short time the veldt for some distance round was dotted with small fires where parties were cooking their meat. Their mode of doing so was somewhat curious. A large pot was put on the fire, and in this was placed some water, and a green branch or two from a neighbouring tree. Into this the meat was dropped, the bones having first been carefully removed, and the mess was allowed to stew or simmer for a whole day. The water and the branches prevented the meat from burning, and on the following day it was ready for eating, when the people devoured it with an avidity that was sickening to watch, washing it down with huge potations of native beer, until they could eat and drink no more, but fell down and slept where they were on the open veldt. Such was the life that was pursued in Rhodesia before the coming of the white men.

CHAPTER III.

THE CONCESSION GAINED.

IN the year 1888 three Englishmen arrived at Lobengula's kraal at Gu - Buluwayo, Messrs Rudd, Thompson, and Maguire, and this visit was destined to have great and far-reaching results. Several prospectors were already in the country trying to obtain concessions of gold-bearing land, but these three did not follow in the wake of those who had come before them and rest contented with a few hundred acres of land—they employed other methods. They boldly proposed to Lobengula that he should grant them a monopoly of all the gold-reefs in his country, and they offered him liberal terms as an inducement. This mode of procedure, of course, cut the ground from under the feet of the others who had been fishing for concessions, and consequently some very bitter feeling was shown against the three gentlemen mentioned above, as well as against Mr Cecil Rhodes, who was then chiefly known as a rising statesman in Cape Colony, and recognised as being the moving spirit in the Company that was behind the three prospectors—a Company that has since gained a

world-wide reputation as the British South Africa Company.

Those who had been swamped by the action of the Company through its representatives did all that they could to prevent the granting of the concession and to excite the suspicions of Lobengula and his leading indunas, so that the situation of Messrs Rudd, Thompson, and Maguire, who were veritably "outcasts in a strange land," became a somewhat serious one. Stormy meetings took place day after day before the king and his indunas, and no means were deemed too dishonourable to be used against the Company by the interested opposition. Mr Rhodes and his friends were assailed and vilified in every possible way, and the opposition told Lobengula plainly that he was giving away his country and not even getting the proverbial "mess of pottage" in return. They hinted that Rhodes and his white men would come into the country and seize his towns to dig under them, and that he would be king no longer, while his indunas and his women would be forced to serve as the white men's slaves.

Lobengula, however, was far from being a fool, and could see through the manoeuvres of the opponents of the Chartered Company. Loché, too, an induna of remarkable far-sightedness and breadth of view for a Kafir, and who had long been Lobengula's principal adviser, was strongly on the side of the Chartered Company, and urged the king to grant the concession. This Lobengula seemed to be in a fair way of doing, when an unfortunate incident arose which not

only terminated the negotiations for a period, but almost led up to the general massacre of all the white people in the country. This incident was the reception by Lobengula of a letter from the Aborigines Protection Society in London,—a Society whose aims are excellent, but whose methods leave a good deal to be desired, to say the least. This letter advised the king most strongly not to grant a monopoly to any one company, as he would be endangering his independence by so doing. Unfortunately Lobengula and his counsellors had no means of arriving at the degree of authority with which this Society spoke, and therefore they attached an exaggerated importance to it, and the suspicions that had been formed in the king's breast by the arguments of the interested opposition were fanned and grew until the outlook became very threatening for the representatives of the British South Africa Company.

As soon as this letter was read to the indunas, and they began to show fear of granting the concession, Lobengula saw that for his own safety it was necessary for him to disavow the steps that he had been on the verge of taking; so he turned on Loché, whom he made the scapegoat, and ordered his instant execution. Before the unfortunate chief could make any defence, or even speak, he was seized and taken from the king's presence and his brains dashed out in front of the waggons of the white men, who were powerless to interfere. Not content with this, an impi was despatched to burn the home of Loché and to confiscate his cattle. The natives were very excited, and openly threatened the white men who were

known to be favourable to Rhodes, and their camp was surrounded and the inhabitants detained as prisoners. The situation was growing graver every day, and it seemed as though, thanks to the interference before referred to, every white man in the country would be butchered, when, fortunately, there arrived at Bulawayo the one white man who had any real influence over Lobengula, Dr Leander Starr Jameson.

Dr Jameson had in the past successfully treated Lobengula both for gout, from which he was a great sufferer, and for sore eyes, and the king maintained a warm feeling of regard for him. On his arrival, when he saw how things were going, he immediately threw the whole weight of his influence into the balance on behalf of Mr Rhodes and his Company, and this action served in a great measure to relieve the tension of the situation: the white men in Matabeleland were once more safe, and all difficulties seemed to be smoothed over.

As has been said, the arrival of the envoys of the Chartered Company at Bulawayo was brought about chiefly by the action of Mr Cecil Rhodes, who was then Prime Minister of Cape Colony, having succeeded Sir Gordon Sprigg. He was filled with an intense desire to unite and consolidate the railways and telegraph systems of South Africa, and to extend both northwards towards the Zambesi,—for even at that early date he saw the great gain that would accrue to the British Empire to have the control of the interior of South Africa. He saw, likewise, that Germany from the west and Portu-

gal from the east were each casting covetous eyes on the rich territory of Matabeleland and Mashonaland, while the Boers in the South African Republic showed a disposition to trek over the Limpopo, and he understood what a severe blow it would be to Great Britain's supremacy in Africa if any of these Powers, but more especially Germany, should obtain possession of the new territory. He realised that it was not only necessary to act, but to act quickly, and he conceived the scheme of the Chartered Company, and was fortunate enough to find in England sufficient influential support to enable him to push forward his plans; and while negotiations were proceeding with the Government for the granting of a royal charter, Messrs Rudd, Thompson, and Maguire were sent up to Lobengula, as we have seen, to endeavour to get the concession from him.

The king several times wavered in his attitude towards the Company, and for a long time did not seem to be able to make up his mind whether he would grant the concession or not. The terms that were offered to him were tempting, being £100 in British currency every month, 1000 Martini - Henry rifles with 100,000 rounds of ammunition, and a steamboat on the Zambesi, or the sum of £500 in lieu as compensation; and these terms he was strongly urged by Dr Jameson and others to accede to. On the other hand, he had a haunting fear, engendered by the opponents of the Chartered Company, that this was an insidious attempt to take his country from him and to make slaves of his people; but at length he

was convinced of the needlessness of those fears, and on October 3, 1888, he signed the concession. By the terms of this concession the Company was to have the exclusive right to search for and work minerals in the country, and it was also authorised to take "all necessary and lawful steps to exclude from the Matabele kingdom, principalities, and dominions all persons seeking land, metals, minerals, and mining rights therein," while Lobengula undertook to render all assistance to expel such people.

So soon as this concession was signed the efforts to obtain the charter were redoubled, and on October 20, 1889, twelve months later, the Queen affixed her signature to it, and the British South Africa Company then entered upon the active sphere of its existence. The charter was an extremely long and comprehensive document, divided into thirty-five paragraphs, and showing the original grantees to be the Duke of Abercorn, the Duke of Fife, Lord Gifford, V.C., C. J. Rhodes, Esq., A. Beit, Esq., A. H. Grey, Esq. (afterwards Earl Grey), and G. Cawston, Esq. By this charter the Company was empowered to hold the concession granted by Lobengula to Messrs Rudd, Thompson, and Maguire for twenty-five years, and after that period it might be renewable for terms of ten years. The Imperial Government maintained a supreme control over the territory thus acquired, and the Company had to undertake to act upon the advice of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and to adopt any course upon any question that might be deemed best by the Government. It was to preserve law and order within the country,

establishing an adequate police force for that purpose, and to treat the natives fairly, while suppressing the trading in slaves and the sale of liquor to natives. By the terms of the charter, also, the Company is required to have its head-office in Great Britain, and its principal representative in South Africa as well as its directors must be British subjects. The religion followed in the country was not to be interfered with, except, the charter was careful to add, "so far as may be necessary in the interests of humanity,"—a saving clause that was very necessary; while in the administration of justice due regard was always to be paid to the customs, laws, &c., of the tribe, class, or nation to which the parties concerned belong. The Company's powers and privileges were also clearly set forth, and its scope and extent carefully specified.

On receiving the charter the Company at once prepared to commence that task for which it had been called into existence. Camps were formed in different parts of the country, and stores were sent forward to them for the use of the pioneer column which was then being organised in Cape Town and other parts of the Cape Colony.

Towards the end of the year 1889 the news reached Lobengula that an army of white men were preparing to march through his territory to Mashonaland, and a severe reaction against the Company at once took place. The old fears and suspicions were revived with added force, and the Matabele became very threatening in their manner towards those white men who were known to be either in the

employ of the Company or to be in any way in sympathy with them, and the position of these men became grave in the extreme. The camps that they had formed were surrounded day by day by crowds of angry natives who required but the slightest provocation to massacre them all out of hand; and it needed great powers of self-restraint and patience on the part of the beleaguered Englishmen to suffer in silence the indignities and insults that were daily heaped upon them. They were powerless to retaliate in any way, for to retort would have been the sheerest folly, seeing how few they were in number, and how they were scattered about the country. Several of the more timorous, however, hastily quitted the country without waiting for the king's permission for them to go; but so long as they were those who were not actively connected with the Company, Lobengula did not trouble himself about them. The rest, however, were kept under the strictest surveillance.

A diversion occurred in favour of the whites in February 1890, when two envoys of the Queen arrived at Bulawayo to announce to Lobengula that the royal charter had been granted to the Company, and advising him to give them all the assistance that he could. These envoys were Captain Ferguson and Surgeon-Major Mellidew, both of the Royal Horse Guards, and they were attended by a corporal and a private of the same regiment. They were the guests of Major Maxwell, the representative of the British South African Company at Bulawayo, during their stay, and the king expressed himself as de-

lighted to see them, and gave them a hearty welcome to his country.

When they appeared before the king and the indunas at the first *indaba* or council, they all wore the full-dress uniform of their regiment, and caused a tremendous amount of excitement in the kraal as they passed through it; for the natives had never seen anything like it before, and they fought and struggled round the Guardsmen in eager endeavour to see themselves in the bright steel cuirasses which they wore, and which the natives took to be looking-glasses. Lobengula received them in state, and they handed him the letter they had been entrusted with, which was opened and interpreted. This done, the envoys presented the gifts that they had been charged to convey to the king, which included a handsome revolver and a pair of field-glasses from the Duke of Abercorn, the chairman of the Chartered Company.

Lobengula expressed himself as highly delighted with the gifts, and entertained the envoys to a meal of beef and beer, the staple diet of the country. After this had concluded, the Guardsmen gave an exhibition of the sword exercise for the entertainment of the assembled tribe, who watched the clock-work-like movements of the men with wonder. The king was very curious as to the reason for their wearing breastplates of steel, and asked them if the Englishmen were afraid to fight without being guarded with iron. In a year or two's time he was destined to learn in a forcible manner that this was not the case.

Their duties concluded, and the king's reply prepared and delivered to them, the envoys had completed their task, but they were not allowed to leave the country without the white inhabitants doing their best to entertain them to the utmost of their limited capabilities. It has often been asserted that the first step an Englishman will take when arriving in a new country will be to lay out first a racecourse and then a cricket-ground, and this was certainly true with regard to Matabeleland; for when the question was raised as to how best to entertain the bearers of the Queen's message, it was decided to hold a race-meeting, the first of its kind ever promoted in Rhodesia. A spot was selected near the kraal at Bulawayo, and a fairly good course was laid out with hurdles. A goodly number of horses were entered, some of which had not the slightest pretensions to speed; and Lobengula and some of his chief indunas, who entered into the affair with zest, likewise entered horses. The programme as drawn up consisted of four events—the Zambesi Handicap, the Gu-Buluwayo Plate, and two minor events, all of which produced very fair sport, while the king's joy knew no bounds when he found that he had gained one of the prizes. A race for natives only was also held, and this created much amusement, for the Matabele never use horses for riding, and are totally ignorant of the merest elements of the art, and they therefore cut queer figures in the race. But they enjoyed it immensely. There was really a good attendance of whites, many of whom had come long distances to take part in the affair, while a

large crowd of natives collected to see the white men at their sports.

On the following day some impromptu athletic sports were held, and before the departure of the party for England the annual war-dance of the Matabele also took place, at which they were present. Some 10,000 men took part in it this year, and the ceremony of throwing the spear was omitted owing to Lobengula being unable to walk through another bad attack of gout. During these festivities, however, there was a growing feeling of alarm among the natives at the continued preparations that were going forward for the despatch of the pioneer column, and when the dance took place the younger natives were rather threatening in their attitude towards the English officers, but the affair passed off quietly on the whole.

In Cape Colony, and indeed throughout the whole of South Africa, a great deal of the interest that was being manifested in the new country at this time was being centred in the pioneer force for which Major Frank Johnston was recruiting, and the object of which was to cut a road from the Tuli river through the eastern portion of Matabeleland to Mount Hampden in Mashonaland. Arrived at the latter place, a town was to be established and liberal grants of land and gold-mining claims to be made to those forming the column, which was really the nucleus of the colony that has since sprung up in Mashonaland. There is something almost romantic in the thought that this little band that was to assemble on the banks of the Molopo river near

Mafeking, from Cape Town, the East Coast ports, Johannesburg, and other parts of South Africa, was to march into a practically unknown land to found a new colony and plant another jewel in the diadem of the grandest empire that the world has ever seen.

The Cape Town contingent of this corps left for the north on the 15th of April 1890, amid the cheers and good wishes of the large crowds that had assembled to see them depart. They were bound for Mafeking, on the frontier, and *en route* were to pick up those of the corps from the East Coast who were likewise desirous of seeing for themselves what the new land was like and who had been assembled at Kimberley. A halt for a short time was made at this town, and before the column proceeded to Mafeking they were reviewed by Sir Henry (now Lord) Loch, then High Commissioner for Cape Colony, who, after the review, expressed his hopes for the success of the expedition. When they arrived at Mafeking they found their Johannesburg comrades awaiting them under the command of Captain Mandy.

Here the final steps were taken towards the equipment and organisation of the corps. Each man on joining had signed an agreement with Messrs Johnson, Heany, and Borrow to place himself under military control and discipline in every way, —a very necessary step in view of the attitude that the Matabele were taking up. The corps was 180 strong, and was composed chiefly of Britishers and Britisher Afrikaners (men born in Africa of British parents), and a fine well-set-up body of men they

were. Plucky and fearless, they were just the sort to confront the dangers that lay ahead of them, and to conquer all difficulties that might beset them.

Their uniform consisted of tunic and trousers of brown corduroy, yellow leather leggings, and regulation army boots, while their head-dress was the picturesque soft felt hat that is the distinguishing mark of our colonial soldiers, and which is usually known as the "Buffalo Bill" pattern, and this was also of brown. The arms of the troopers consisted of Martini-Henry rifles, with the cartridges carried *en bandolier*, and revolvers; while waterproof coats, regulation army saddles and bridles, blankets, &c., were also provided by the Company. The pay of the troopers was at the rate of 7s. 6d. per day, while the officers received more according to their ranks; and each man in addition to his pay was promised a farm of 3000 acres and fifteen gold claims in Mashonaland.

The corps was divided into three troops, A, B, and C, the first two of which were mounted infantry, while C formed the artillery troop, the heavy guns consisting of 7 - pounders and quick - firing Maxims, and to this troop was attached a detail of bluejackets to handle the quick-firing guns. The command was taken by Major Johnson, while the Company commanders were respectively Major M. Heany and Messrs H. F. Hoste and J. Roach.

When all the details of equipment, &c., had been settled, the column at length left Mafeking and pushed on towards the Limpopo, the start being

made on May 17, and the Limpopo was reached and crossed thirteen days later. The objective of the column at that time was the Macloutsie river, where they were to be met by some troops of the newly formed British South Africa Police, and this river was reached on June 13. Here a halt was called. The discipline of the Pioneer Corps had been rather loose at first, but as they approached the Matabeleland frontier it became much more rigid, and during this halt on the Macloutsie river almost incessant drilling took place. This was done on two accounts. Firstly, the attitude of Lobengula and his impis was getting less friendly every day, and it seemed almost certain that an attack would be made upon the column before it had proceeded very far into Matabeleland; and, secondly, before the corps was to be allowed to enter the country, Major-General Lord Methuen, the Adjutant-General of the British forces in South Africa at that time, was to inspect them and report on their fitness or otherwise for the task before them. When the review had passed off General Methuen expressed himself as entirely satisfied with the aptitude for their work which the column had shown, and bade them God-speed, and the column then crossed the Macloutsie river and commenced the next stage of their journey, which was to the Tuli river, the southern boundary line of Matabeleland. The land between the Macloutsie and Tuli rivers was then known as the "disputed territory," it being claimed by both Lobengula and Khama, the king of the Bamangwatos, as forming part of their dominions. This dispute, it may be

mentioned, was ultimately settled in favour of the latter king, the land being added to the Bechuana-land Protectorate.

As they marched through this country every precaution was taken against attack by the Matabele. When the column halted for the night a *laager* or enclosed camp was formed, the waggons being arranged in a diamond-shaped wedge, with either a 7-pounder or a Maxim at each corner. Each waggon had its distinct place in the formation, and every man knew his post, so that a *laager* could be formed in a very short space of time on the scouts reporting the presence of a hostile body when the column was on the march. While marching the long train of waggons was preceded by an advance-guard of troopers, who rode some two hundred yards ahead of the main body. The waggons numbered thirty-six, and as each was drawn by about sixteen pairs of oxen, they extended for a considerable distance over the country. On either side of the waggons rode troopers in pairs at a distance of about two hundred yards from each other, while the rear was brought up by a small guard similar to the one in front. In addition to this, scouts were despatched to examine the country on either side of the column, and it was rendered next to impossible for a large body of Matabele to approach without warning. It was undoubtedly the intention of the impis to take the convoy by surprise if they had an opportunity. The chief aim in Zulu warfare is to surprise the enemy, as when the Prince Imperial of France lost his life;

and had they been able to come upon the column suddenly and without warning of their approach, there would have been but few left to carry the news back to Cape Town. But, thanks to the admirable care and foresight of Major Johnson and those serving under him, this the Matabele were prevented from doing, though, as will be seen later, the column had some very narrow escapes from being attacked.

Another factor which undoubtedly prevented any hostile impis from trying to "rush" the laager in the darkness was an electric searchlight that the column had with them, and which was supplied by a dynamo run by a steam-engine that was going forward to work a saw-mill. The eerie manner in which this flashed around the country—now across the dark sky, seeming to extinguish the stars by its brilliance, and now stealing over the veldt like some gigantic glowworm, now flashing this way, now that—served to imbue the natives with a wholesome terror, and to keep them at a safe distance. It was also very useful to detect the presence of any lurking foe in the vicinity of the laager.

Marching steadily forward towards their goal, the Pioneer Column arrived at the Tuli river on July 1, 1890, and Matabeleland having been at last entered, a halt was called while a fort was constructed and the final arrangements made. It was here that the real work of the Pioneers began. Three troops of the British South Africa Company's Police were now attached to the column, the troops being commanded by Major Sir John Willoughby and Captains Heyman and Forbes. These served

to bring up the strength of the column to between 400 and 500 men. The supreme command of the force was now taken over by Lieutenant-Colonel Pennefather, a British army officer of ripe experience; while Mr F. C. Selous was appointed chief of the Intelligence Department,—a position for which his long training as a hunter and his great knowledge of the country to be passed through peculiarly fitted him. The fort that was being constructed, and which received the name of Fort Tuli, was to form the base of the column, and a road was to be cut from here right away to Mount Hampden, a distance of something like 400 miles.

While the troopers had commenced to make this road under the direction of Mr Selous, Lobengula, for one reason or another, chose to take it ill that the force should be cutting their way through his territory, though he had previously given his consent to this being done, and had received the payment for the concession. He now sent a message to Colonel Pennefather stating that if the column still wished to go forward, it must do so by way of Gu-Buluwayo; and this having no effect on the column, he sent a further message by two whites, one of whom was the celebrated African hunter Mr J. Colenbrander. This latter message was couched in the following terms: "Who are you, and where are you going? What do you want, and by whose orders are you here? Where are you leading your young men to like so many sheep, and do you think that they will all get back to their homes again? Go back at once, or I will not be answerable for

the consequences. Do you not think that white blood can flow as well as black?" To this defiant and threatening note Colonel Pennefather returned the following reply: "I am an officer of the Queen of England, and my orders are to go to Mashonaland, and there I am going. We do not want to fight, we only want to dig for gold, and are taking this road to avoid your young men; but if they attack us, we know how to defend ourselves."

When Lobengula assented to this road being cut, he had an idea, in all probability, that the task would prove too great for the Englishman's powers; but the result showed him to be wrong, and therefore he attempted to frighten the column away by a threat to turn his impiis loose upon them,—a threat that proved futile and recoiled upon himself. As a counterstroke, a force of the Bechuanaland Border Police was moved up to the western boundary of Matabeleland; and so Lobengula saw that should he attempt to attack the column as it marched forward, his soldiers would be caught between the two white forces with disastrous results. To this bit of "bluff" is to be attributed in some degree the immunity of the Pioneer Column.

Making the road proved to be a difficult task. First of all, the trees on the line of route had to be hewn down and the undergrowth cleared away. Some of the sandy approaches to the rivers had to have a road of "corduroy" laid down to make them firm enough for the heavily laden waggons to pass over; while in some of the dry *spruits* or river-beds huge boulders had to be moved bodily

aside. The work was apportioned between the A and B troops of the Pioneer Column, and each troop was divided into two sections while employed on the work. One-half of the men worked, while the other half rode in their wake fully equipped and leading the horses of the working party, so that in the event of an attack the whole band would have been prepared to fight at a moment's notice. The road-making party throughout the march was always kept about ten miles or so in advance of the main body; and in this fashion the first body of British colonists entered the land that was later to be known as Rhodesia.

CHAPTER IV.

FOUNDING A COLONY.

ON July 6, 1890, the B troop of the Pioneer Column crossed the Tuli river, and commenced to cut the road through the 400 miles of trackless wilderness that lay between them and their destination at Mount Hampden. The men quickly became accustomed to the work, and considerable progress was made in a short time. The natives on the route, who were mostly of the Makalaka tribe, were somewhat anxious when they saw the white men cutting their way through their country; but they were soon reassured, and told that the Pioneers came as friends and not as enemies, and that it was their intention to prevent the Matabele from slaying and raiding as they had been so long in the habit of doing.

The main column commenced its trek or march across Matabeleland on July 11, 1890, and was composed at that time of 200 of the British South Africa Police in addition to the 180 members of the Pioneer Corps, while it was accompanied by no less than sixty-five waggons. Among those going for-

ward with the column were Mr Colquhoun, who had been appointed Administrator of the country, and Dr Jameson.

All had gone well with the column so far, with one exception,—the amount of “horse-sickness” that prevailed. Nearly a hundred of the Pioneer horses had died of this disease between Mafeking and Tuli, and the scourge showed no signs of abating. After a good deal of hard work on the road by the Pioneers, the Lundi river was reached and crossed on August 6, and a short halt was called. While the column rested here Mr Colenbrander arrived with a further message from Lobengula, to the effect that the impis had defied him, and had fully determined to slay every man of the column, and that there were at that time no less than 9000 men on their way to carry out that laudable intention. The message terminated with the advice that the column should instantly turn back if they would avoid being cut to pieces.

This was serious news, but nothing was further from the minds of the column than to turn back and admit themselves beaten. Scouts were sent out in all directions by Colonel Pennefather to seek for signs of the Matabele in the neighbourhood, and these soon returned with the information that there was a large impi encamped on the banks of the Tokwe river, directly in front of the column, and across its line of route. This seemed to give confirmation to the warning of Lobengula, but the column pushed resolutely forward, keeping a very sharp look-out, and at length reached the Tokwe

river without having come into touch with the impi. That it was somewhere in close vicinity to them was reported by the scouts, and at length the place where it had recently been encamped was discovered, but nothing was seen of the force itself. The scouts followed up the trail of the Matabele force and found that it was marching parallel to the column, and evidently seeking a suitable place for an ambushade. Presently it seemed to have changed its mind, for it gradually melted away, and was not seen again anywhere near the column, though vague rumours of its presence were rife among the natives in the villages through which the column passed.

On August 14 another halt was called while a fort was constructed, which was afterwards named Fort Victoria, and here a company of Police under Major Sir John Willoughby was posted to guard the line of communication. This done, the column once more pushed forward to its destination, which it was now rapidly approaching. Towards the end of this month Mr Selous resigned his position as chief of the Intelligence Department, as the most difficult portion of the route had now been traversed, and, accompanied by Dr Jameson and Mr Colquhoun, struck off to the east into Manicaland, a journey that was destined to have rather important results. Captain Burnett was appointed to the position vacated by Mr Selous, and the column went forward under his guidance. About midway between Fort Victoria and Mount Hampden another fort was built and christened Fort Charter, and shortly after the last important river on the line of march, the

Umfuli, was crossed, on September 6, and the force eventually arrived at the spot selected for the last fort on September 10,—almost exactly five months from the time of the column leaving Cape Town, and less than four months from the date of its quitting Mafeking. During this time a journey through a difficult and almost unknown country for 800 miles or so had been performed; a practicable road had been laid out for half this distance, and three forts erected for the protection of those who should follow; while for nearly the whole way the column had been harassed by the fear of attack from a bloodthirsty and savage foe who was hovering around them in overwhelming numbers, and who, moreover, had the advantage of knowing the country thoroughly. This march of the Mashonaland Pioneers was a monument to British pluck and tenacity of purpose, and the annals of Britain's colonial history, replete as they are with brilliant feats, can show nothing finer than this.

On September 11, 1890, a parade was called of all the members forming the column, and the country was formally taken possession of in the name of the Queen. A rough flagstaff had been hastily erected, round the base of which the corps was drawn up, and on a given signal from Colonel Pennefather there was a quick jerk at the halyards, when a small bundle of coloured bunting was quickly run up to the top, and as this slowly unfurled itself, it displayed the well-known quarterings of the grand old union-jack. Prayer was offered up by the Rev. Canon Balfour, who had gone up with the column, and, amid cheers

for the Queen a salute of twenty-one guns was fired by the 7-pounder battery.

The situation of this fort, which shortly afterwards was named Fort Salisbury, in honour of the Imperial Prime Minister, was a healthy one, being high on a plateau some 300 feet or so above the sea-level, and near to a small stream, the Makabusi. The column was maintained as a separate force until the fort was built, and then, on October 1, it was disbanded, and its members immediately made a rush for the gold-fields, about which such a lot had been heard.

The principal fields, as known at this time, numbered three: the Umfuli or Hartley field; the Lo Magondi field, to the north-west of Salisbury; and the Mazoe valley field, to the westward of the Lo Magondi field. It was the first of these that was the most generally known, and as it had the reputation of being very rich, it was here that the greatest rush was made by eager prospectors to peg out the claims which they had earned by their work as pioneers.

In accordance with their promises, the British South Africa Company now issued the necessary licences to those entitled to prospect, for which the nominal charge of 1s. was made. Armed with this document, a pioneer was entitled to stake out a block of fifteen claims in any gold district of the country,—a claim, it may be explained, being a piece of ground 150 feet long and 400 feet broad. There were various conditions attached to these licences, the chief being that the holder was liable to be called upon to take up arms in defence of the territory of

the British South Africa Company; while, having regard to the fact that it was the Company that was providing the money for the opening up and development of the country, 50 per cent of the shares of any company floated to work gold-mining claims in Mashonaland were to be allotted to the Company. This clause is still in operation, but it has never been enforced to the full amount, the Company generally being contented with a much smaller proportion of the shares.

There were some members of the Pioneer Corps, however, who preferred to remain in the neighbourhood of Fort Salisbury and the police camp that had been formed near it, and very soon a small village began to spring up here. By the following March most of those who had wandered afield in search of gold, so soon as the Pioneer force was disbanded, returned to Salisbury either to negotiate the sale of their claims to one of the many syndicates and companies that were springing up like so many mushrooms, or to prepare for still more extensive explorations in search of gold; while not a few had returned disenchanted, for they had not found the fabulous fortunes awaiting them that they had come to expect, and so were prepared to shake the dust of the country from their feet.

There were many of these disappointed and disenchanted persons in Salisbury about this time, for so soon as the reports of the rich finds on the Mashonaland goldfields by the Pioneers filtered through to the south, a tremendous rush of gold-seekers was made, and the roads leading to the

north became crowded with people of all nationalities in all manner of vehicles, eager to reach this latter-day El Dorado. Hastily conceived and badly equipped as most of these expeditions were, the natural corollary was seen when the rainy season came on and overtook these rash and unthinking emigrants. The rivers became swollen and prevented their crossing, horse-sickness killed off their horses, while the noxious tsetse-fly decimated their cattle, and hardships and sufferings of every kind surrounded them. Detained for weeks in the low-lying lands on the banks of the rivers, and without the necessary medicines to keep them in health, and with only the scantiest food, scores of these foolish travellers died and were buried on the wayside without ever having as much as seen the land that had lured them to their death. On the goldfields, too, malaria and other sickness were rife, food was very dear and of poor quality, and soon dozens of half-starved and fever-ravaged prospectors began to return to Salisbury, there to recount their sufferings and privations. It was indeed a gloomy sequel to the glowing pictures of "Golden Mashonaland" that had been drawn but a few months before.

The rainy season had been a very severe one, and though numbers of waggons containing provisions and other necessities had been despatched from Cape Town, the state of the rivers and the roads prevented their getting through to Salisbury, and something like a famine now prevailed in that town to add to the discomforts already being experienced. Enormous prices were paid for the

commonest necessities of life, while the principal food of many of those on the goldfields was pumpkins, which grew around in great profusion, and boiled rice. No wonder that even the most optimistic began to grow discouraged. In addition to these troubles, it was found that it was impossible to cut a road through to Salisbury from the East Coast as had been attempted, for there was a belt of country that was infested by the dreaded tsetse-fly, so that the cattle were unable to cross it. This to many was the last straw, and several began to return to the south to tell their experiences. These accounts sent the pendulum of public opinion with regard to the new country swinging back, and caused some of those who had hitherto been enthusiastic in their support of Mr Rhodes and his expansionist schemes to stop and ponder whether they had done well. In the main, however, it was recognised, both in South Africa and in England, that this reaction was caused almost entirely by the settlers themselves, and was only what had happened on the first discovery of almost every goldfield throughout the world.

Those who remained in the country meanwhile set themselves resolutely to conquer the difficulties that lay before them, and to "put their house in order" before the coming of another wet season. It has been said that soon a considerable village began to spring up at Fort Salisbury, but it would be more correct to say that two villages were being formed closely adjacent to each other. Messrs Heany, Borrow, and Johnson had located a large

reserve near a kopje or hill about a mile from the police camp, and it was around this kopje that most of the settlers pitched their camps, while the remainder built their dwellings around the police camp. The town, as it began to grow, thus became very straggling and divided, and this proved a great setback to its prosperity during the early days of its existence. Most of the huts were of the flimsiest description, and just joined together roughly, the only buildings of anything like a substantial nature being the police barracks and the Administrator's quarters. The reason for the roughness and flimsiness of the construction of the settlers' houses and stores is not far to seek. Strictly speaking, at this time Salisbury was not a town at all, but merely a mining camp built around a semi-military fort. From some inexplicable reason, the Company did not take steps to form a town there in the orthodox manner until August 1891, eleven months after the arrival of the Pioneer Column, and then their hands were practically forced by the settlers, who were rapidly erecting a town of their own without the interference of the Company. It was long before it was known where the site of the town was to be, and with things in this state none would, of course, build houses or shops of a substantial nature when they might find that after all the town was to be some miles away, and they would have to pull their dwelling down and rebuild it, or be content to remain out on the veldt. It was generally thought that the site to be ultimately chosen would be that around the kopje, and here

the land began to be staked out in all directions, until whole streets were formed. The first street thus located was given the name of Pioneer Street, which name it bears to-day. Those who had staked out land here found that their judgment had been correct, for the Company at length had the ground surveyed and the town laid out, and some of those who had marked off their land discovered that they were placed in most favourable positions, and were able to realise on them at a handsome profit. So soon as this survey was made a great impetus was given to building, and several substantial buildings, chiefly of dried mud, began to spring up in all directions.

The Government, however, had never been thoroughly satisfied with the site, and about twelve months later a new town was surveyed adjoining the old one near the kopje, to which was given the name of the Causeway. Here the Government and other public offices were situated, and every inducement almost was offered to merchants and others having buildings at the Kopje, as the old site was now called, to migrate to the new township. For the most part, however, they held aloof, as they claimed that, seeing they had gone to considerable expense in erecting their buildings, the Company should pay them compensation if they migrated to the new site. This the Company, not unnaturally perhaps, refused to do; so that the result is seen to-day in the scattered nature of the town at Salisbury when compared with Bulawayo, or indeed with almost any town that has since been built in Rhodesia. About

this time, too, a township had also been formed at Hartley, near the goldfields; but, unfortunately, the climate here was very unhealthy. Indeed so bad was it that the medical officer sent by the Government to report on the healthiness of the town declared on his return that no European could live in it for longer than two years.

As has been stated in the previous chapter, in addition to the gold-mining claims each pioneer was entitled to a farm of 3000 acres; but not many of these had been located, chiefly on account of the greater attractions of searching for gold, and of the fact that the Government required that the owner should have a *bonâ fide* occupation of the land. This condition was shortly afterwards repealed so far as the Pioneers were concerned, but it was announced that no farms could be located within six miles of Fort Salisbury. Towards the end of 1891 Dr Harris arrived at Salisbury, as the town was now officially designated, the "Fort" having been dropped, and this gentleman, who was then acting as secretary of the Chartered Company, took charge of the administration of the country during the continued absence of Mr Colquhoun in Manicaland. While acting in this capacity Dr Harris set about the introduction of various changes in the granting of farm rights, which tended to improve the relations between the Government and the settlers, these having become rather strained. Farms were now allowed to be pegged within three miles of the fort, but here the occupation clause was rigorously enforced. This proved a very popular concession,

however, and the land around Salisbury was quickly located.

During the early part of 1891 an event occurred that served, for the time being at anyrate, to divert the attention of those at Salisbury from the hardships they had endured and the grievances they already began to consider that they had against the Company, and this was a call on the part of the Government for volunteers to occupy the newly acquired territory of Manicaland, which was situated on the healthy uplands to the south-east of Salisbury. This country was under the control of a chief named Umtassa, and a concession of the mineral rights of his country had been gained from him on behalf of the Chartered Company by Dr Jameson, Mr Colquhoun, and Mr Selous—the last named having gone straight to his kraal on quitting the Pioneer Column at the end of the previous August.

The country of Manicaland was a fine one, and well suited for European colonisation, but there were destined to be difficulties in the way of its occupation. The Portuguese colonists on the East Coast had viewed with considerable disfavour the incursion of the British into Mashonaland, and when they heard that a concession had been gained from Umtassa they decided on interfering; so they claimed the whole of the territory of Manicaland as belonging to them, and announced their intention of expelling by force any of the British South Africa Company's forces that might enter it. This news was quickly followed by the intimation that two Portuguese officers, Colonels Paiva d'Andrade and Gouveia, were

marching into the country with the avowed object of compelling Umtassa to publicly recant his concession to the British.' On their way this force halted at Massi-Kessi, a fort on the eastern frontier of the country where the British had left a small garrison, and they compelled this handful of Britishers to retreat, while they hauled down the British flag and trampled it underfoot. Such conduct as this last excited a strong feeling of resentment not only in Mashonaland, but throughout the empire at large.

The British South Africa Company at once decided on taking prompt measures to avenge this insult to the flag and to dispose of the Portuguese pretensions, so a force of about thirty police under the command of Major Forbes was despatched to Umtassa's kraal. Arriving there, this handful of Britishers found the two Portuguese officers supported by nearly 300 native levies, chiefly from Angola, preparing to make Umtassa recant the concession. With a daring that was almost reckless Major Forbes took the bull by the horns, and at once placed the two officers under arrest. Before they fully realised what had happened, he had sent them off to Salisbury under a strong escort, while he disarmed their soldiers and turned them out of Manicaland. Not satisfied with this, he pushed forward to Massi-Kessi and took possession of the fort once more. He then conceived the bold idea of making an attack on Beira, the Portuguese port at the mouth of the Pungwe river.

What with providing an escort for the two Portuguese officers and leaving a garrison at Massa-Kessi, Major Forbes's little force had become rather de-

pleted, and he found that the whole army at his disposal for the siege of Beira numbered but six troopers. The exploits of these seven men read more like a chapter from the lives of the immortal Three Musketeers than a sober record of events that happened within the last decade; for they marched through an unknown country for 150 miles to the Pungwe river, and there embarked in canoes for Beira, which was well garrisoned with white Portuguese troops, and there seems to be little doubt but that these men would have captured the town, had it not been for the interference of the Government. They saw complications ahead as a result of this action on the part of Major Forbes; so he was ordered to return to Salisbury immediately, and had perforce no alternative but to obey.

Negotiations followed between the British South Africa Company and the Portuguese authorities, and in the end the two Portuguese officers were allowed to return to their own country, while the Company was permitted to hold the country ceded to them by Umtassa, Massi-Kessi being made the frontier, while the fort itself reverted to Portugal. The Portuguese, however, were seriously affronted by the action of the tiny British force which had made laughing-stocks of its soldiers, and therefore, in spite of the settlement which had been arrived at, steps were taken to equip a force to finally drive the British from the territory and to avenge the manner in which Major Forbes had treated them. It was to resist this force that the Pioneer Column was being raised in Salisbury.

Several volunteered for the work, and at length fifty men, composed jointly of Pioneers and police, with a 7-pounder gun, were drawn up under the command of Captain Heyman; and these were despatched to Manicaland to watch the movements of a large Portuguese force that was collecting near Massi-Kessi, and to take possession of the country. This little force halted on Chua Hill, a short distance from Massi-Kessi, and found that the Portuguese had assembled an army of 100 whites and about 400 natives. At length the Portuguese were ready for striking a blow at the audacious English, and a message was sent to Captain Heyman telling him that unless he immediately withdrew the whole of his forces from Manicaland he would be attacked. Captain Heyman bluntly replied that he would do nothing of the kind, so the Portuguese resolved on making an attack on the British position. Captain Heyman had, with considerable foresight, taken his position on the upper slopes of the hill, and this meant that the enemy would have to fight their way up the slope, a condition that served in some degree to neutralise the great odds, which were fully ten to one.

The fatuity of the Portuguese leaders was truly wonderful. They had with them no less than eleven quick-firing guns of the most modern description, and these, coupled with their great numerical superiority, might well have gained them the day; but as the commander considered that the guns might hamper his movements, they were left behind when the force advanced! It swept rapidly over

the plain at the foot of the hill, and commenced a hot fire on the British position; but the aim was very bad, and only little execution was done. The Britishers, on the other hand, reserved their fire until the enemy got well within range, and then poured some deadly volleys into the thick of them. The accuracy of the British aim and the rapidity of their fire disconcerted the native levies, who made one or two spasmodic rushes and then wavered. The 7-pounder then opened fire upon them with canister, and this caused them to break and flee in the utmost confusion. The whites, however, were made of sterner stuff, and they made one or two desperate efforts to rush the British position, but were always met with a withering fire, and were soon compelled to retreat. Some parting volleys were sent after them, and then Captain Heyman advanced in skirmishing order across the plain in the direction of the fort, which capitulated forthwith.

This fort was at once occupied and the British flag hoisted, while precautions were taken against a counter-attack, and a quantity of loot, including the eleven quick-firing guns, was taken possession of. This decisive victory, which occurred on May 14, 1891, was received with jubilation in Salisbury, and indeed throughout Africa.

About this time, also, an attack was made on two boats, the *Agnes* and the *Shark*, which were proceeding up the Pungwe river with stores for Sir John Willoughby, and these were conveyed back to Beira, where they were detained. Affairs were becoming serious, for in Lisbon the Government

was getting together a force of some 600 or 700 men for service in Africa; but fortunately Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office was keeping a sharp eye on the movements of Portugal, and he promptly put an end to the affair by sending an ultimatum to Lisbon that had the effect of putting matters on a proper footing. In the following month, June, a treaty was concluded between the two countries whereby the seaboard of South-East Africa as far as the Natal boundary was left in the hands of Portugal, while the highlands, with the exception of a reservation at Massi-Kessi, were ceded to the British. A rectification of the frontier of the territories north of the Zambesi was also effected.

This was not the only trouble with foreign States that the Company was destined to have about this time, for a slight difficulty occurred with the Transvaal Boers. Several of the inhabitants of the northern portion of the Transvaal had shown a disposition to trek across the Limpopo and establish themselves in a small colony in the southern part of Mashonaland. This raised a warm protest from the British South Africa Company, and Mr Rhodes made a significant speech at Cape Town on the subject, in the course of which he warned President Kruger that "no more republics would be permitted to be established in South Africa." A strong body of British South Africa Police were sent down to the Limpopo to guard the "drifts" or fords and to turn back any Boers who might attempt to cross, and in this work they were ably supported by a contingent of the Bechuanaland Border Police. Of

course the Boer President disclaimed any intention of sanctioning such a proceeding on the part of his burghers, and indeed expressed a mild surprise that such a thing should have occurred ; but it was only by the prompt action of the Chartered Company that serious difficulties with the Transvaal were prevented.

CHAPTER V.

WAR WITH THE MATABELE.

THE difficulty with the Portuguese once disposed of, the settlers in Mashonaland and the newly acquired territory of Manicaland commenced to develop the mines and to exploit the agricultural value of their adopted country. The last few months of 1891 were days of great prosperity, and during this time Dr Jameson superseded Mr Colquhoun as Administrator. All went as merrily as the proverbial marriage-bell for a time: then the tide began to turn, and, as before mentioned, an exodus commenced to take place. Before the end of this year Mr Rhodes paid his first visit to the country that mainly through his efforts had been added to the empire. He only made a short stay at Salisbury, but during that time a meeting of the settlers in and around the town was held, and as a result a deputation was formed to lay their more or less substantial grievances before him.

The chief of these grievances was the 50-per-cent clause of the Government. This was held to be a great burden on the mining section of

the community. The fact that the Chartered Company was preparing to spend thousands of pounds on railways and suchlike for the express purpose of lessening the cost of the transport of mining machinery and other heavy goods, which, had they to be sent up from Cape Colony by waggon, would cost a prohibitive sum, did not weigh in the least with these short-sighted agitators. They preferred to take the line that it was they who provided both the capital and the labour for working the reefs, and that so soon as the mine began to repay them, they were called upon to hand over one-half of whatever they earned to a company far away in London, and one which had not raised a finger to assist them in any way.

This was altogether a wrong view to take of the case. The prospectors were incessantly expatiating on the great benefit that would accrue from the construction of a railway from Salisbury to the East Coast, but they overlooked the great cost of such an enterprise, as also did they the fact that the 50-per-cent clause was almost the only form in which they contributed to the revenue of the country in which they were winning their livelihood. It should be said, however, that it was mainly the settlers themselves who were in antagonism to the Company over this question: the syndicates and companies that were formed in London or elsewhere to exploit the mines saw things in a far more reasonable light, and accepted the 50-per-cent clause cheerfully, as being requisite for the rapid opening up of the country. When

the deputation waited upon Mr Rhodes to explain their discontent, he met them with perfect courtesy and explained to them frankly what the position of the Company was, and it is to their credit to say that many of the delegates accepted Mr Rhodes's statements. On the other hand, several settlers, seeing that the Company would not repeal the obnoxious clause or reduce the amount, shook the dust of the country from their feet and returned to the south.

Prior to this set-back the country had been progressing splendidly. The trans-continental telegraph line was rapidly approaching Salisbury; on the goldfields the chaff was being separated from the wheat; while in Manicaland the agricultural prospects were very bright. In the latter province a township had been surveyed at Umtali, and buildings were rapidly springing up there, while the neighbourhood round about was being actively prospected for gold with a fair amount of success. A scheme was on foot to connect Umtali to Beira by railway, and to bring this line eventually forward to Salisbury; and preparations were being made for the survey of the land for this purpose. In fact, everything seemed to be going on most auspiciously, when an incident unfortunately occurred in Salisbury which once more strained the relations between the settlers and the Government: this was the disbandment of the police.

By the terms of the Charter the British South Africa Company was compelled to keep up an adequate armed force for the protection of the colonists,

—a very necessary proviso, but one which pressed heavily on the finances of the Company. From one cause or another the original capital of the Company, £1,000,000 sterling, had already had great inroads made upon it, while the income had been practically *nil*, and it was clearly seen that great retrenchments would have to be made. Mr Rhodes threw himself into this question of husbanding the finances with characteristic energy, and mainly through his efforts the expenditure was reduced from about a quarter of a million per annum to something like £30,000. Of course this reduction meant wholesale pruning and trimming, and the police, which formed by far the heaviest drain on the Company's coffers, was one of the first items to which attention was given.

A few months previous to this a proposition had been mooted in Salisbury to form a volunteer force among those resident in the immediate vicinity for the protection of the town from any possible incursion on the part of Lobengula and his impis; and this idea was eagerly taken up, though it was openly asserted later on that those who suggested the scheme did so at the instigation of the Government. The corps was constituted, however, and christened the Mashonaland Horse, and Major Forbes was elected by the popular vote of the members of the force to be the commanding officer. The Company welcomed the idea of this corps, and aided the formation and equipment in every manner possible. So soon as the corps was formed the Government took the step that brought down a storm upon their

heads, for they disbanded a large proportion of the police force, and contended that, with the Mashonaland Horse in existence, a large body of police to protect Salisbury from assault was no longer required. Both the men forming the corps and the outside settlers took this very ill, and declared openly that the members of the Mashonaland Horse had been duped by the Company, and that they were expected to do for nothing what the police had been paid to do. The breaking up of the police, too, affected the commercial portion of the community considerably, for nearly the whole of the discharged men immediately quitted the country, and as hitherto the police had formed a considerable section of the population, there was at once a falling-off in trade. It is difficult to tell how this dispute would have ended had it not been for the appearance of another and greater cloud on the Mashonaland horizon—the attitude of the Matabele.

Many of these Matabele had entered the service of the white men at the mines—for it soon became apparent that while the Mashonas made excellent husbandmen, they were of little use at the mines, so that it was necessary for other natives to be engaged. Those who seemed best suited for mining were the Shangaans from the northern banks of the Zambesi, but they were comparatively few in number, so the Matabele were employed when Shangaans were unobtainable. These Matabele were, however, a source of great trouble, both to the Native Commissioners who had been appointed in each mining district to supervise and protect the natives,

and to the miners employing them. They were incorrigible thieves, and would suddenly depart with all and everything on which they could lay their hands. In this manner solitary prospectors in the open country, without any other Europeans near them, were at the mercy of these "boys" (as the native labourers in Africa are termed), and it was nothing uncommon for information to reach Salisbury that a white man had been robbed and left destitute on the veldt by the Matabele boys he had employed. As time went on they became more daring, for the magistrates in one or two cases had shown unwarrantable leniency with such of the natives as had been brought before them for stealing (and leniency in the Kafir mind is synonymous with weakness), so that the natives had come to think they could do pretty much as they liked without fear of retribution. Reports of murders and attempted murders of whites by Matabele consequently began to arrive at Salisbury, until strong demands were addressed to the Government for steps to be taken to put this lawlessness down and to teach the Matabele a much-needed lesson. Unless the whites managed to catch the "boys" in the very act of robbing them, moreover—and this they were but rarely able to do—it was next to impossible to arrest them, for they made straight for the Matabeleland border, over which Lobengula had forbidden the whites to cross.

Things went on in this manner throughout 1892 and the beginning of 1893, when the attitude of the Matabele served to precipitate matters. In all the communications between the representatives of the

Chartered Company and the natives of the Mashona, Makalaka, and Banyai tribes, a great point was made of the fact that the white men were going to prevent the Matabele from raiding them and stealing their women and cattle. In consequence, these tribes became exultant over the freedom from attack that they were promised, and put on very insolent airs towards Lobengula and his impis, for they thought that they were now safe from the Matabele vengeance. This conduct from the tribes that Lobengula and his nation had learned to look upon as their slaves and dogs, to be beaten, robbed, and massacred whenever it pleased their masters to do so, came as a complete surprise to them, and greatly incensed the young soldiers. Lobengula, however, saw the reason for this, and guessed that the Mashonas were assured of the white man's protection, and therefore so long as was possible he restrained his impis from attacking the tribes. At length, however, they got out of hand, and he was obliged to give his consent to their entering Mashonaland and inflicting condign punishment on the impudent Mashonas, who now refused to pay any tax to Lobengula or to obey his commands in any way.

The impis selected for this work of vengeance were strictly enjoined by the king not to harm the whites or to interfere with them or their property; and in July 1893 the Matabele army crossed the border and entered Mashonaland. They made straight for Victoria, around which was the chief dwelling-place of the Mashona tribe; and the news of this advance of the Matabele sent a feeling

of something akin to consternation through the whites in the country, and the development of the country was stopped. Messages were sent off to Lobengula to recall his soldiers, but he replied that no harm would happen to the white people, and that he had a right to punish his "slaves"; but in spite of that the settlers felt that this was but a preliminary movement to see what the attitude of the British would be before commencing a regular attack on them, with the object of driving them from the country and annexing their guns and blankets, which had excited the cupidity of the Matabele.

When the impis arrived at Victoria they made at once for the settlement of the Mashonas, who saw the unexpected arrival of their bloodthirsty foes with wild cries and shrieks of dread and despair; and the Matabele were soon at their favourite pastime of stabbing and mutilating in horrible fashion the defenceless men, women, and children of the tribe, while they seized the cattle of their victims, together with their young women and girls.

The white men in Victoria were, as may be imagined, indignant and wrathful in the extreme at this massacre before their eyes, and the Government were called upon to put an end to it. Dr Jameson at once answered the demand by proceeding to the scene of the massacre attended by a handful of police. He sent out to summon the leading indunas of the Matabele army to an indaba, and when they were assembled he told them plainly that they must at once return to their own country and cease for all time from slaying and pillaging among the Mashonas.

Otherwise, he warned them, he should take them and hang them. This bold speech of the Administrator had its desired effect in one or two cases, for some of the lesser indunas, with considerable difficulty, drew off their men, who were very loth to leave, for the lust of blood was upon them. These withdrawals, however, only numbered a few hundred men, for the great body of the indunas and the men under them were very defiant, and openly threatened that it would not be long before they served the white men as they were then serving the Mashonas. In the end Dr Jameson gave the impis until the evening of that day to prepare to leave the country, otherwise he told them that he should order the white police to drive them out, and the indaba then broke up.

A small force of police under Captain Lendy was in Victoria at this time, and these were held in readiness to enforce the Administrator's words if the Matabele refused to leave. The indunas quitted the indaba with the idea that the few whites in Victoria would never dare to proceed to the lengths that Dr Jameson had hinted at, and they were so accustomed to victories over impotent foes that the idea of any one successfully resisting them, much more defeating them, seemed absurd. The calm tones of the Administrator, however, had occasioned them a certain amount of uneasiness, so they determined to test the whites and see what really would happen. The main body of the impi was withdrawn for a short distance, and a sort of a rear-guard of a few hundred warriors was left behind to test the courage of the

white men and to see whether Dr Jameson was as good as his word. At sunset this rear-guard was still pillaging and burning the Mashona kraals and slaying such of the inhabitants as they came across, so the little body of police rode out against them. The spot where this took place was an open plain well adapted for the movements of the horses of the troopers, and the police spread out into skirmishing order and advanced directly towards the Matabele, who collected to oppose them. As the Britishers rode towards the natives the latter opened fire upon them, and in retaliation the troopers fired some volleys into their midst and charged them. This firing on the Matabele by the police was strongly condemned at the time in certain quarters in England, and Dr Jameson and Captain Lendy were roundly accused of "ruthlessly shooting down the defenceless Matabele"—a sweeping charge, for which there does not seem to be any foundation. It was also declared that the native soldiers were "hutchered" even when they threw down their arms and craved for mercy. This is not by any means the case. It is certain that the police only fired on the natives when they had been first fired upon by them, and their conduct during the whole affair was only that which Dr Jameson had given the indunas to understand it would be if they disregarded his orders for them to retire. In all cases where quarter was asked for, moreover, there is not one tittle of evidence to show that it was not readily given, but in the hands of some people at this time any stick seems to have been good enough to beat the Rhodesian dog with.

After this outbreak the requests which had been made for some time previously for the Company to dispose once and for all of the Matabele incubus that was retarding the progress of the country was now renewed, and public meetings were called at both Victoria and Salisbury to enforce this demand. The settlers expressed their views very forcibly on the question, for they saw that their homesteads would never be safe nor the country tranquil while the Matabele impis were allowed to hover on the frontier ready to sweep across the country whenever they felt so inclined. They spoke out plainly and insisted on the Company crushing the Matabele power without further delay, otherwise they threatened either to appeal to the Imperial Government to send up forces to protect them and to take over the country as a Crown Colony, or to combine together and quit Mashonaland in a body.

The Government at Salisbury was therefore confronted with a grave crisis, and Dr Jameson telegraphed the position of affairs to Mr Rhodes at Cape Town and asked for advice. He told him of the attitude of the settlers and of the threats held out, and inquired whether he should enter Matabeleland with the object of breaking up the nation. Mr Rhodes's reply was laconic in the extreme, being merely a telegram bearing the words, "Read Luke xiv. 31." Dr Jameson was surprised by this enigmatic answer, but he knew Mr Rhodes's manner, so he looked up the indicated verse and found it to run as follows: "Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and

consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?” Dr Jameson understood the question that was implied by this thoroughly. Could he with the forces at his command, considerably under 1000 men, hope to cope with the whole fighting force of the Matabele nation?

After careful consideration Dr Jameson decided that he could do this, so in equally laconic terms he telegraphed back to Mr Rhodes, “All right. Have read Luke xiv. 31”; and thus in two abrupt telegraphic messages the breaking up of the Matabele nation was decided upon, and the preparation for the invasion of Matabeleland commenced.

It seems only probable that this step would have been decided on sooner, before the outbreak at Victoria, had it not been that the hands of the Company were to a certain extent tied by the Imperial Government. Lord Ripon was at this time at the Colonial Office, and he seems all through to have been hopelessly out of touch with the real trend of affairs in Mashonaland. Sir Henry Loch, the High Commissioner at the Cape, had had instance after instance of Matabele hostility reported to him, until he at length came to see with the rest that the Matabele power must be destroyed, and though none could accuse him of being in the slightest degree jingoistic, he decided that sooner or later this must be done, and that it would be for the good of the whole of South Africa to have the fighting over and done with as soon as possible. He reported these views to the Colonial Office, but they seemed

to carry little weight; for, true to the policy that governed (or misgoverned, whichever be the correct term) South Africa for so long, the opinion of the British representative on the spot, who might have been supposed to know something about the matter, was ignored and brushed aside. Lord Ripon, in reply to the despatches of Sir Henry Loch, ordered him to inform the British South Africa Company "that unless they were attacked, no aggressive movement was to be made without your [Sir Henry Loch's] previous sanction and approval." This was very right and proper, for it would have served to remove any suspicion of fillibustering on the part of the Chartered Company; but the most remarkable part of the message was still to come, for Lord Ripon continued, "If your sanction for an offensive movement is asked, communicate with me before replying," thus meaning that weeks, or maybe months,—for Downing Street is not notorious for its alacrity of movement,—would elapse before the Company would be in a position to follow up any advantage that it might have gained over the Matabele. But at length things became so bad that even Lord Ripon was brought to see what the upshot of it all would be, and reluctantly the imperial sanction to Dr Jameson's advance into Matabeleland was given.

There were other and serious difficulties in the way of this advance, however, besides the want of men and the imperial sanction, and of these the outside public was not aware. The Company realised as well as, perhaps better than, the settlers that

there would be no peace in Mashonaland until the days of the supremacy of the Matabele nation were over; but—and it was a momentous “but”—their finances were at a very low ebb, and totally unfitted to stand the drain of a war. The settlers did not look at the financial side of the question, and would have made light of it if they had, for a Government is always supposed to be rolling in wealth, but the officials of the Company knew better, and therefore their disinclination to precipitate matters can be well understood.

Mr Rhodes, however, once more proved to be the sheet-anchor of the country, and so soon as he realised that the Matabele must be conquered, he determined on putting his hand into his pocket and providing the funds for the campaign. This, too, without ostentation or parade. He merely indicated to the Board of the Chartered Company in London that the money for the march on Bulawayo would be forthcoming, and left them to draw their own inferences as to the source.

At this time, too, Mr Rhodes was already spending a vast amount of money out of his private purse on the new country. He was providing four-fifths of the capital for the railway from Beira to Umtali, as well as a like proportion of the capital for the trans-continental telegraph; just previously he had found the greater part of the money for the extension of the railway from Cape Colony northwards to Mafeking; and now, on the top of all this, he was to find this money for the prosecution of the war against the Matabele. It is often remarked

that the ex-Empress Eugenie of France was at one time, before its disastrous termination, in the habit of referring to the war of 1870 as "*ma guerre*," but Mr Rhodes had a far better right to refer to the first Matabele war in those words. All must admire the loyalty and self-sacrifice which Mr Rhodes exhibited at this time, as indeed he has done at all others, towards the new country, of which he was the leading spirit.

So soon as the necessary funds for the campaign were assured, the preliminaries were entered upon. It was decided to form three columns of about 250 men each, of the mounted infantry type,—by far the most suitable for this class of warfare,—while each would be accompanied by Maxim and other quick-firing guns. The first column was called the Salisbury Horse, and was largely composed of the members of the Mashonaland Horse, which was disbanded about this time; and Major Forbes took command of this. The second column was recruited from Victoria and district, and was called the Victoria Rangers, being under the command of the gallant and unfortunate Major Alan Wilson; while the third was being formed in Johannesburg and the neighbourhood of the Rand by Commandant Raaf, a Dutchman. These columns, according to the plan of campaign, were to join forces at Iron-Mine Hill, on the Matabeleland frontier, to the south-west of Salisbury and almost in a direct line between that town and Bulawayo, while Colonel Goold-Adams was to advance on Bulawayo from the south-west with a column of the Bechuanaland Border Police.

Before commencing this march the Salisbury column was moved down to Fort Charter for a short time, and the men left the capital on September 5, 1893. Each man of the column carried ten days' provisions on his horse with him, together with a hundred rounds of cartridges, while the heavy guns of the column consisted of a 7-pounder, two Maxim guns mounted on galloping carriages, a Gardner gun, and a Nordenfeldt.

So soon as the column had quitted Salisbury a sort of panic seems to have seized those who remained behind, and who were forbidden by the Chartered Company to attempt to leave the country in its then unsettled condition. It was realised that should the advancing force meet with a reverse at the hands of the Matabele, the latter would at once make a dash for Salisbury, and, flushed with their victory over the white force, would massacre all whom they found there. It was decided to fortify the jail, so that it might offer a retreat upon which the population might fall back and there make a last stand if the worst should come to the worst; and this was done in as effective a manner as the means at their disposal would allow of.

The Salisbury column spent a month at Fort Charter drilling and getting the men and the horses accustomed to the work that lay before them, and then on October 2 the force moved forward towards the rendezvous. Elaborate precautions were taken on the march against surprise by the Matabele, and laagers were formed every night in a similar manner to that adopted by the Pioneer Column.

As the Salisbury column marched forward, that from Victoria did likewise. This latter body consisted of 415 Europeans, and was armed with a 7-pounder screw gun, a Hotchkiss, and three Maxim guns on galloping carriages, together with a force of about 400 Mashonas under Mr Quested.

These columns combined at Iron-Mine Hill, as had been arranged, on October 16, and the final preparations for the advance were made. The force was placed under the command of Major Forbes, while Dr Jameson assumed the direction of the campaign. On October 15 the first casualty occurred to the force, a scouting party being attacked by a band of Matabele, with the result that Captain Campbell was killed. The objective of the column at this time was the Shangani river, and as they advanced through the Matabele country all the kraals they met with were destroyed. Contrary to expectations, the Matabele did not attack the column, but contented themselves with firing on isolated scouting parties, and in this way the force sustained a severe loss in the death of Captain Burnett, who was shot while out scouting. From the accounts of those who were with him, it seems that he had ridden up to a hut which was to all appearance deserted, and was about to dismount in front of it, when he was fired on from the interior, the bullet striking him in the abdomen. This was the gentleman who took over the guidance of the Pioneer Column when Mr Selous retired, and he was a first-rate scout.

The Matabele were very badly generalled at this

time, and, indeed, throughout the war; for they threw away several opportunities of attacking the invading force while it was passing through the thick bush country, when they might have inflicted considerable loss on it, with the result that later they had to fight against the British on the open plains, when the conditions were much less in their favour. The Shangani was reached and crossed on October 24, and there the column halted to await the reports of the scouts who had been sent out to ascertain the movements of the enemy.

CHAPTER VI

WAR WITH THE MATABELE—*continued.*

THE Shangani was crossed in safety, and a double laager was formed and protected by thorn-bushes. As the column had approached the river a number of Mashonas who had been captured and carried off by the Matabele were rescued and restored to such of their friends and relations as were with the native contingent under Mr Quested, while a herd of cattle was captured by the column.

The native camp on the Shangani was situated some 600 or 700 yards from the laager, and when preparations came to be made for spending the night of October 24 here, it did not seem as though there was a hostile native anywhere near. As the troopers retired to rest they could hear the laughter and unceasing chatter of the natives, and the next thing that those on guard within the laager heard was screaming and cries of terror coming from the native kraal, where just previously joy and gladness had been reigning supreme. The alarm was given, and the laager was at once manned and scouts were sent forward to see what the occasion of the hub-

bub was, when it was found that a strong body of Matabele had suddenly swooped down on the helpless Mashonas and were stabbing and killing right and left.

From what was afterwards gathered it appeared that this force of Matabele had been lying concealed in an adjacent ravine waiting for the laager to be wrapped in slumber previous to making a sudden attack, and so they settled down to wait until the noise among the Mashonas should have subsided; but the joy of the latter at meeting the long-lost fellow-members of their tribe had prevented them from going to sleep, and it seemed to the impatient watchers as though they were going to keep up the merriment all night. At length the Matabele saw the dawn approaching; and rather than be baulked of their prey, they made a rush on the kraal, intending to sweep on to the laager later. Here, however, they showed exceedingly bad generalship, for almost as soon as they commenced their work of slaughter among the Mashonas, the British camp was wide awake, and not only prepared to receive the onslaught, but able, in fact, to send out a detachment to clear the Matabele from the kraal. Advancing steadily and pouring withering volleys into the serried ranks of the Matabele, this force soon beat them back and rescued the Mashonas from their clutches.

While this was going forward a daring attempt was being made to attack the laager from another side. About 300 Matabele without their shields collected on a small hill some little distance from

the camp, and as the daylight grew marched directly forward to the laager. So cleverly was this movement carried out that for the moment even Major Forbes was deceived into believing them to be friendly natives; until they got close up to the waggons, when they calmly halted and commenced firing into the camp. This sudden attack took the garrison somewhat by surprise, and had the aim of the Matabele been better they might have done considerable execution; but, fortunately for their antagonists, the Matabele had a superstition to the effect that when using a rifle the higher the back-sight was raised the better would be the aim, and consequently the great majority of their bullets flew harmlessly over the laager and dropped on the other side. Major Forbes immediately detailed some 200 rifles to drive back this party of natives, and this was quickly done; for as the bullets began to fall among them, and their numbers were getting thinned out, the remainder retired over the hill from whence they had come with considerable precipitation. A small party of cavalry was sent out to follow this impi and break it up, but once beyond the range of the death-dealing rifles of the white men, the Matabele re-formed, and turned on the cavalry and caused them to retire on the laager, losing several of their horses as they did so.

This retreat of the British horsemen served to revive the flagging courage of the Matabele, and they dashed up at the laager with increased vigour, but as they approached the Maxims were turned on them and literally mowed them down like grass

before a scythe. About this time, too, Captain Lendy had got the 1-pounder Hotchkiss gun into working order, and having got the range of some of the more distant bands of Matabele, the shells from this gun were soon dropping among them, much to their consternation, for they were unused to artillery fire. After a temporary retirement, a third and final attack was made on the laager, and this time they got very close indeed; but the combined fire of the rifles and the Maxims was once more too much for them, and they were compelled to retire once more, this time not to return. As they made for the bush the cavalry sallied forth and followed them up, and the natives were too dispirited to turn on the horsemen as they had previously done.

Parties of the column then swept the ground round the laager to clear out any Matabele who might be lurking about, and the first battle with the Matabele was over, and had resulted in the defeat of some of Lobenguela's best impis. On the British side the casualties amounted to one trooper killed and six wounded, the firing of the Matabele, as before stated, being very wild, while the destructive fire of those within the laager had prevented the natives getting close enough in to hurl their spears. In addition, about forty or fifty of the Mashonas under Mr Quested had been killed in the first attack. The losses on the Matabele side were estimated at about 500 killed and wounded out of the 5000 or so that were engaged.

So soon as the road was reported clear by the

scouts the column moved forward on its way to Bulawayo. On the day following this engagement of the Shangani, a party under Captain Heany advanced towards a large military kraal, but on the enemy appearing from it in force the patrol was compelled to fall back on the main column, which instantly put itself into a position of defence; but the Matabele avoided coming to close quarters, and eventually retired. The enemy, while declining to attack the column, were ever hovering around it watching for opportunities to cut up any detached parties that they might come across, and collisions between the scouts and the Matabele were of constant occurrence. It was in one of these skirmishes that Captain Gwynyth Williams was killed under peculiarly sad circumstances. He was out with a small scouting party which was attacked by a strong body of Matabele and compelled to retire to the protection of the column, having to run the gantlet of the Matabele fire for about 100 yards or so. As this was being done, Captain Williams's horse got out of hand, and taking the bit between its teeth, dashed straight away for the Matabele lines. The natives sent up shouts of joy as they saw the solitary white man being borne quickly towards them by his runaway steed, and numberless rifles were at once turned on the animal and its rider, with the result that the horse was shot in the flank. Captain Williams managed to disentangle himself as the horse rolled over, and making his way to a neighbouring rock, planted his back against it, and prepared to sell his life dearly. The Matabele were

getting very close to him now, but he maintained a steady fire with first his magazine rifle and then his revolver; but at length he dropped, shot through the temple, though not until he had sent several natives to their last account.

The Matabele maintained these tactics of keeping at a distance from the main body of the column until the force was about twenty miles from Bulawayo, when on October 29 the scouts reported that the natives were massing in strong force in front of the column. The British force was then near the Bembesi river, and a laager was immediately formed, it then being about midday. It was soon made clear that Lobengula had resolved on making a final effort here to maintain the integrity of his kingdom and to repel the whites, for no sooner had the construction of the laager been commenced than a strong party of Matabele was seen advancing towards them. The guns under Captain Lendy got the range of this body at 1800 yards and quickly threw some shells into it. As this was being done the whole of the bush around suddenly became alive with natives, and a rush was made at the laager. It was about this time that a serious incident happened, the horses of the column being stampeded through the stupidity of the friendly natives within the laager, who were in great affright at the attack; but Sir John Willoughby and Captain Borrow instantly dashed off after the animals, accompanied by a few troopers. The frightened animals were making directly for the Matabele position, but the horsemen managed to head them off, and despite the hail of

Matabele bullets that was falling around them, at length managed to turn them back towards the laager. As this little party galloped back to the shelter of the waggons a strong body of Matabele rushed after it and followed it up to within about 200 yards of the laager, when the combined fire of the rifle and the machine-guns proved too much for them, and they were beaten back. The Matabele fire now became very hot, and the aim was much better than it had been on the Shangani.

The main attack was directed towards the right of the British position, and here several desperate rushes were made with which it took the defenders all their time to cope. In addition to a hot rifle-fire, which was being maintained, on this side of the laager were posted the Nordenfeldt and Gardner guns, together with a Maxim; but even in the face of this fire the Matabele charged forward time and again, getting on occasions within 300 yards of the waggons. At length the direct aim of the British and the rapidity of the discharges of the machine-guns proved too much for the Matabele, and they were forced to retire. They retreated very sullenly, however, disdaining to take advantage of any cover that offered itself from the galling fire which the British kept up, and in this fashion they retired to the hills, leaving the road to Bulawayo open to the column.

The attack had been a very severe one, and the Matabele had lost heavily, one regiment, the Imbezu, which had led the attack and displayed great bravery, losing 500 men out of the 700 which it had when it commenced the struggle. On the British side the

casualties amounted to four killed and six wounded. A curious fact that was noted in this engagement was the way in which the natives stopped firing at the laager at times to fire at the shells from the guns as they flew over them, under the impression that if they could but hit them before they burst they would prevent them doing any damage,—a fallacy that proved expensive to them before the fight was over.

So soon as the news of the result of this action reached Bulawayo, Lobengula displayed great chagrin at the defeat of his troops, and at once set about making preparations for quitting his capital and retreating into the bush. As the column marched forward across the veldt to the hill of Thabas Induna, which is situated a few miles to the south-east of Bulawayo, they came into contact with several parties of the enemy; but a few shells from the guns were in every case sufficient to send them off into the bush, for, to tell the truth, by this time the Matabele had almost had their fill of fighting.

As the column advanced towards Bulawayo a loud explosion was heard coming from the direction of the capital, and dense volumes of smoke could be seen ascending into the air. Two American scouts who had accompanied the column, Messrs Burnham and Ingram, and who had proved of the greatest service, were sent forward by Major Forbes to ascertain the cause of the explosion, and they soon returned with the intelligence that the Matabele had set fire to Bulawayo in four places and then evacuated the town, retreating towards the north-east, while

the explosion was caused by the flames reaching a stock of 2000 lb. of gunpowder which had been stored in the kraal. On November 4, 1893, the advance-guard of the column under Captain Borrow marched into the deserted town of Bulawayo and formally took possession of it, while the main body arrived three days later. The former of these dates has since been constituted a public holiday in Rhodesia under the title of "Matabeleland Occupation Day."

On November 8 news reached Dr Jameson of the Tuli column, which was then about sixty miles off, and was making but slow progress owing to the cattle having become almost worn out with the amount of hard work they had had to do. This force consisted of 225 men of the Bechuanaland Border Police, with five Maxims and two 7-pounder guns under Captain Coventry, and had been joined at Tuli by Commandant Raaf's force of 225 men with one Maxim, while the Bechuana king Khama was also with the column with about 1800 natives, the whole force being under the command of Colonel Goold-Adams. This column had not had any serious fighting, but inasmuch as it had caused Lobengula to detach a force of about 8000 men to watch its movements, it had been of great service to Dr Jameson's column.

On leaving Tuli Colonel Goold-Adams had marched towards Tati, and at this place had happened one of the most regrettable of the many unfortunate incidents that characterised this campaign, and one, moreover, that was seized upon with avidity by that section of the British press—fortunately a small and

uninfluential one—that was eagerly watching for the slightest peg on which to hang a string of calumnies against Mr Rhodes and the brave men who were then fighting against the Matabele. It is, unfortunately, so easy to sit at home in a comfortable arm-chair and pour forth vigorous denunciations on the heads of those of one's countrymen who are battling with hordes of savages in a distant land. The incident here referred to is the killing of two of Lobengula's ambassadors by the members of Colonel Goold-Adams's force. Lobengula had sent a mission consisting of a white trader at Bulawayo, Mr Dawson, and three indunas, one of whom was his half-brother, Ingubogubo, to hold a parley with the leaders of the column. Unfortunately when the camp of the column was reached Mr Dawson became separated from the indunas, who wandered round the camp in aimless fashion. Colonel Goold-Adams noticed them roaming about, and seeing that they were Matabele, and having no knowledge of the expected arrival of any mission, took them for spies, and at once ordered their arrest until they could give a satisfactory account of themselves, as he was perfectly justified in doing by all the rules of warfare either against a civilised or a savage foe.

As the troopers advanced to carry out this order the indunas became alarmed and made an attempt to escape, turning on two of the guards and stabbing them to death in their efforts to get away. The murder of these two men and the menacing attitude of the indunas caused the troopers to go to the extreme length of firing upon them, with the result

that two of them were killed, while the third, Ingubogubo, quietly yielded himself up as a prisoner. The news of this affair reached the High Commissioner at Cape Town, Sir Henry Loch, and he promptly ordered an inquiry to be held into the whole matter. Ingubogubo was sent south, and the inquiry was conducted by the Military Secretary to the High Commissioner, Major Sawyer, who in the end completely exonerated all concerned from blame, and expressed his opinion that the whole thing arose from a series of extraordinary mischances; and this seems to be the only possible view to take of the affair—though ugly insinuations were thrown out in England that the column had deliberately murdered two defenceless natives.

The object of Colonel Goold-Adams on leaving the Tati district was to push forward to the Singuesi river, which he reached on October 29. Having arrived there, he was told by his scouts that the Matabele were massing across his line of march, and on November 1 some of his waggons were attacked by a force of the enemy about 600 or 700 strong when about a mile and a half from the camp. The aim of the Matabele on this occasion was to get if possible between the patrol and the camp, so that they might cut up the former at their leisure, and a warm engagement took place, during which Mr Selous was wounded, and one white, Corporal Mundy, was killed with an assegai. The mounted men in the laager at once turned out on the news of this attack on the waggons reaching them, and this party successfully covered the retreat of the convoy. The

Matabele, however, followed up the retiring Britishers right to the laager, and charged straight up to within 150 yards of it, but there they remained. They could get no nearer; the storm of lead from the rifles and the Maxims was such as would have baffled experienced and war-scarred European veterans, let alone an ill-disciplined mob of naked savages. They soon began to waver, and then finally broke and made for the adjacent hills. As the enemy retired the mounted men of the column followed them up, and together with Khama's natives commenced sweeping the enemy from the surrounding hills, until at length after an hour's hard fighting there was not a Matabele left in the neighbourhood, and the column was assured of a safe progress for the next few miles of its journey. The engagement, however, had served to slake Khama's thirst for fighting, for he forthwith announced his intention of withdrawing his troops and returning to his own country, alleging as a reason that there was an outbreak of smallpox among his soldiers. As it turned out, the column met with no further opposition, and it arrived at Bulawayo, forming a junction with Major Forbes's forces on November 12.

Just before Captain Borrow and the advance-guard of the column under Dr Jameson and Major Forbes arrived at Bulawayo, Lobengula had fled in the direction of the Bubi river, and was reported to be hiding there, and thither Dr Jameson sent a message calling upon the king to surrender himself and thus avoid further bloodshed, giving him two days in which to do so. Lobengula returned no direct

reply to this demand, but subsequently sent a message asking that two white traders who were well known to him, and who were at that time with the column, Messrs Fairbairn and Asher, might be sent to talk with him, while he also sent another letter to Dr Jameson with a present of gold-dust. This second letter fell into the hands of two unprincipled troopers named Daniels and Wilson, who traitorously suppressed it and converted the gold-dust to their own uses. This crime was afterwards traced to them, and they were sentenced to a well-merited fourteen years' imprisonment. The treachery of these two men is the one dark spot on the history of the campaign, and for their conduct there is not the slightest palliation: indirectly it led up to the massacre of the gallant little band under Major Alan Wilson.

As the letter intercepted by these two men failed to reach Dr Jameson, he naturally decided that Lobengula was still defiant, and thereupon a patrol of 300 men was formed under the command of Major Forbes to go in pursuit of the Matabele king. This patrol was made up as follows: 90 men of the Salisbury column under Captains Heany and Spreckley, 60 men of the Victoria Rangers under Major Wilson and Captain Lendy, and 150 men of the Tuli column under Commandant Raaf and Captain Coventry; while it was accompanied by a 7-pounder and a detachment of Maxims. The route of the patrol lay through fairly thick bush, towards the Bembesi and Inkwekwesi rivers, and for some time nothing was seen of the enemy, though several deserted kraals were passed on the way. The column

halted at Umlangeni as they were running short of provisions, and some rather sharp passages at arms took place between the leaders as to whether they should push on or return to Bulawayo. Major Forbes was all in favour of the former course, but others, headed by Commandant Raaf, declared that such a course would be foolhardy. The matter was at length solved by the arrival of a messenger from Dr Jameson telling them not to return, as Captain Napier was being sent up to their relief with food and ammunition together with reinforcements. Major Forbes, on hearing this, fell back on to the deserted mission-station at Shiloh to await the arrival of Captain Napier.

Some Matabele had been captured by the scouts of the patrol, and from these it was learnt that the king was in full retreat with four waggons, the oxen of which were almost exhausted through their hard work. On hearing this Major Forbes decided to reorganise his force so as to enable it to move quicker, and with this end in view he sent back some 280 men, taken from his own force of 300 and the reinforcements brought up by Captain Napier, to Bulawayo, with about 1000 of Lobengula's cattle which had been captured, and with 300 men set off in hot pursuit of Lobengula. Much valuable time had been lost by this delay, but the patrol soon came upon the track of the king's waggons and followed them up as quickly as they were able. The progress was not fast enough, however, for the rainy season was now rapidly approaching, and it was desired to have the campaign ended before then if possible; so at Um-

langeni the force was once more split up into two portions, one of which was left behind under the command of Captains Dallamore and Fitzgerald, while Major Forbes pushed on with the other. The latter force was composed as follows: Salisbury column, 28 men; Victoria column, 46 men; Tuli column, 24 men; Bechuanaland Border Police, 60 men. The only heavy guns that were now taken forward were two Maxims. The Bembesi, Bubi, and Gwampa rivers were crossed in turn, and despite the fact that the rainy season was opening, good progress was made, so much so that when at length the force came up to the Shangani it was reported that the king's waggons were only a few miles in front of them.

The two Americans, Burnham and Ingram, were sent across the river to see if they could hear anything of the flying monarch, but they quickly returned with the intelligence that there was a large force of some 2000 or 3000 Matabele in the vicinity, and that these might attack the column at any moment. Later in the day a native boy was captured, who was examined as to the exact whereabouts of Lobengula, whom he declared to be only just in front of them. When Major Forbes heard this he decided on striking at once, so he sent for Major Alan Wilson and ordered him to take twelve of his freshest horses and cross the river and follow up the *spoor* or tracks of the waggon so far as he could, and then to return to the camp, arriving back before dark. Major Wilson at once selected his little force, and Captains Greenfield and Kirton received special permission to accompany him, while the two American

scouts, Burnham and Ingram, were also attached to the party, which then set off across the river. These remaining behind proceeded to make themselves ready for a night attack from the natives, and nothing more was heard of Major Wilson's party until about nine o'clock, when two of the party, whose horses had become knocked up, returned to the laager and reported that Major Wilson was on the heels of the king, and would not return to the camp that night. Shortly before midnight Captain Napier, who had been one of those to go forward with Major Wilson, returned and stated to Major Forbes that they had passed through four *schirms* or enclosed spaces fenced round with branches of trees, &c., searching for the king, but had not found him. They had pushed on to another of these *schirms*, and were about to enter it when a number of natives appeared in the rear, threatening the British party's line of retreat, so that Major Wilson was forced to retire, though it was reported that the king was in the very next *scherm*. Captain Napier further brought a verbal request to Major Forbes asking that the whole column might move forward to his assistance without delay, as the attitude of the natives was becoming very threatening.

This request it was found impossible to comply with, for the column was liable to be attacked at any moment by the Matabele, who were collecting around the laager, and Major Forbes dare not take the risk of crossing the river by night, hampered as he was with his two guns, under these circumstances. He therefore decided to remain where he was until

dawn, when the crossing could be commenced in safety, and then to push on with all speed to the relief of Major Wilson. He realised, however, the danger in which the little band of scouts was in, so he sent Captain Borrow forward with a force of twenty men as a reinforcement, and with the intimation that the column would advance towards him first thing in the morning.

As it happened, no attack on the column took place that night, and at dawn it advanced along the bank of the Shangani, following the tracks of Lobengula's waggons, with its right flank close to the river, and while this movement was being carried out the enemy showed in force in the bush in front, and commenced firing on the column. The two Maxims were rapidly brought to the front of the line, and by pouring a steady fire into the ranks of the enemy were able to frustrate any attempt to charge on their part. Showing better tactics than they had yet displayed, the Matabele attempted to turn the left flank of the column, and so drive them back into the Shangani, but, thanks to the way in which the guns were handled, this move was foiled, and the whites slowly retreated in search of a position at which to take up a stand and assume the offensive. Five troopers were wounded in this attack, but the retreat was carried out very steadily, and was masked with a hot fire from the machine-guns. After going about 600 or 700 yards the column halted in a strip of bush on the bank of the river, and there prepared to drive back the Matabele. As this was being done heavy firing could be heard from the

opposite bank, which indicated that Major Wilson was also coming into contact with the enemy.

The column had scarcely taken up its position when Burnham and Ingram, with a trooper named Gooding, rode rapidly up and dismounted. As they did so, Burnham quietly said, "I think I may say that we are the sole survivors of that party," and then proceeded to load his rifle and help to beat back the natives.

These words of the American scout were unfortunately only too true. So soon as the column had beaten off the enemy, which was only done after some very heavy fighting, the scout Burnham was sent for by Major Forbes to give an account of what had happened, and from what he said it appeared that the little band had been permitted to camp in safety, and had been joined by Captain Borrow and his men before daylight. A discussion took place among the officers, and it was decided to make a dash for the king's scherm at dawn, and endeavour to arrest him. This was done, and entering the scherm they boldly called for the king to come forward and deliver himself up. The only reply to this was a dropping fire from about a hundred rifles from natives who were concealed in the bush on three sides of the party of Britishers, and Major Wilson was compelled to fall back on a large anthill about 700 yards away. They made for this shelter at full gallop. The hill once reached, the party dismounted and made a stand until the natives began to encircle them, and two of their horses were killed. At this point another retreat was decided upon. As this was being carried

out Major Wilson called to Burnham and asked him if he would try and get through to tell Major Forbes what was happening, and this Burnham bravely agreed to do on the condition that he had a companion. Major Wilson saw the reasonableness of this request, and therefore detailed Ingram and Gooding to accompany Burnham, and these three gallant men dashed off under a shower of bullets and spears to ask Major Forbes to set off to the rescue of their comrades. One hardly knows which to admire most—the men who went on this dangerous errand, for the bush between them and the Shangani was now teeming with natives, or those who remained behind battling against overwhelming odds.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCLUSION OF THE WAR.

WHAT afterwards happened to that little band cut off from all assistance and hemmed in on every side by cruel foes, who saw before them an opportunity of wreaking a vengeance on this handful of white men for the defeats they had sustained, was only gleaned at a later date from Matabele who had taken part in the affair and who were subsequently captured. From their accounts it appears that for two long hours this band of thirty-three men with their intrepid leader kept the Matabele at bay. In addition to the two horses that had been killed in the first attack, several of the others were completely worn out and could not travel farther; but, on the other hand, some of the animals were comparatively fresh, and their riders could have got away on them had they been so minded. But they had no thought of doing so. Their attitude is well summed up in the few eloquent words of the scout, Ingram, who said, "Some of the best mounts might have got away, but—well, they were not the sort of men to leave their chums. No, I guess they fought it right out

where they stood." These words pithily sum up the situation, and to add more would be superfluous.

As the horses of the party fell, the troopers made ramparts of their carcasses, from behind which they poured destructive volleys into the thick of their savage antagonists, and so they fought doggedly on, though not a man there but knew that for him the sun had risen for the last time, and that before another dawn he would have solved the mystery of life. Again and again the Matabele charged desperately forward, only to be beaten back by the rapidly dwindling party of whites, who answered the yells of the Matabele with defiant British cheers. Several fell killed or wounded, but the latter conquered their wounds for a time by sheer force of will and gamely loaded the rifles for their companions until the weapons fell from their hands and their eyes closed in death. At the end of two hours but one man of the party was left able to fight, and seizing as many rifles and bandoliers as lay within his reach, he made his way to a small anthill some twenty yards or so from the spot where his comrades had fallen, and from there he checked several rushes in a manner that filled the hearts of the Kafir soldiers with wonder. Such courage as this was a revelation to them. At last a ball struck him in the hip and he was forced to his knees, but even in that crippled state he continued firing till at length the shots of the Matabele evoked no answer, and the last survivor of a brave band was no more. One would like to have the name of this hero to treasure up with those of the remainder of his gallant countrymen, but it has never been discovered.

Now that the white men were all either dead or dying, the Matabele dashed forward with cries of victory; but their exultation was quickly turned to terror, for as they closed around the party, some of the wounded, by almost superhuman efforts, roused themselves sufficiently to pour a scattered volley into the natives from their revolvers. It was as though their shades had come back to protect their lifeless bodies, and it proved the last straw to the already disheartened Matabele, who fled into the bush and did not dare to return to the spot for some hours, when they found that all the Britishers were dead.

Thus, unconquered, fell a band of men who make one proud to belong to the nation that owned them; for they were heroes every one, and their names deserved to be honoured and handed down to posterity as showing how Englishmen can die.

Sad as this disaster had been, it practically decided the campaign; for the Matabele now began to realise the futility of the struggle in which they were engaged, and were prepared to sue for peace. Major Forbes realised that it was hopeless to expect that any of the party could have escaped with their lives, and his own force was in so precarious a position as to render it impossible for him to cross the Shangani, and therefore he began to slowly retreat along the course of the river towards Bulawayo. He was running short of food and ammunition, and in the event of another attack of a serious nature from the Matabele, he would have been hard put to it to defend himself. He therefore decided on communicating with Dr Jameson at Bulawayo and

asking him to send a relief force to meet him with supplies of food and ammunition; and the scout, Ingram—who seemed to love to thrust himself into danger—and a trooper named Lynch, at once volunteered to go on this errand, which was fraught with peril.

Those two men set off at once and made straight for the capital, while the column retreated slowly and cautiously along the river-bank, watching for signs of an attack. The rainy season was now approaching its height, and to add to the many discomforts that were overtaking the force, the horses began to show signs of exhaustion, and many were left for dead on the track of the column each day, while the two Maxim guns were proving a terrible hindrance to the progress of the force, the average rate of which did not often exceed twelve or fourteen miles a-day. On the retreat, too, food became so scarce that on December 6 one of the two pack-oxen had to be shot to provide a meal, and tough, stringy, and badly cooked as this meat was, it was eaten with a relish by the half-starved troopers. On December 7 the scouts fell back on the column with about a hundred cattle belonging to Lobengula; for by the laws of the tribe practically the whole of the cattle in the country was the property of the king, and twenty of these were promptly seized upon with jubilation, for the herd was in good condition, and the troopers saw before them visions of unlimited beef, and their spirits in consequence were considerably raised.

The rest of the cattle were then turned loose on

to the veldt once more, and the column continued its march forward. After going a mile or two a halt was called, and scarcely had this been done before the scouts came galloping back with numberless Matabele bullets whistling around them, and it was plainly evident that the enemy was in force in the bush in front of the column. The Maxims were quickly brought into action, and Commandant Raaf was sent forward with twelve men to clear the Matabele back, and this he quickly did, for the natives turned tail before the troopers in a manner that seemed to indicate that their courage had rapidly diminished since the previous engagements. Unfortunately during this action the Matabele not only recaptured the twenty head of cattle that the column had managed to catch, but the solitary pack-ox of the force was also carried off, and the troopers saw their prospective dinners rapidly vanishing over the veldt.

To add to the troubles of the now dinnerless force, a terrific storm broke over them and speedily soaked them to the skin; and some of the members of the patrol felt so thoroughly miserable and uncomfortable that they would gladly have sunk down where they stood and died on the wayside. The officers, however, showed an admirable example in this time of privation and trial, and by putting a good face on to things so contrived to cheer the spirits of the drooping that at length belts were taken in another hole, and the men strode out cheerily towards their goal as though hunger and wet were the two things they most revelled in.

Three days after this skirmish the column was again attacked by the Matabele, and their horses were almost captured; but, aided by a heavy fire from the Maxims, this disaster was averted, though several of the animals were killed. In this action one Britisher was fatally wounded—Sergeant Gibson, who was in charge of one of the guns. So soon as the enemy had been beaten off and the route was once more clear, Major Forbes decided on a step that he had long been contemplating, and that was the abandonment of the gun-carriages. Experiments were made, and it was found that the guns could easily be carried in blankets by six troopers, and this would enable much better progress to be made, so the plan was adopted for a time, and then the method of transport was once more changed, this time the guns being placed, tripods and all, across the backs of two troop-horses, with a man on either side to support them.

It was necessary to proceed with great caution, however. None knew when another attack on the column might not take place, for there were indications that they were being followed up by large bodies of Matabele; and in this careful fashion the junction of the Shangani with its tributary the Umvungu was reached. Here the party had to leave the river and strike across the country for Bulawayo, and a short halt was made before the start for the capital was begun. Friendly natives were sent forward to the village of Longwe, which was on the route from Bulawayo, to see whether the relief column was coming forward, while messages were also despatched

to Captains Dallamore and Fitzgerald at Umlangeni to advance to Longwe to meet the column. The force had not been settled down at the junction of the two rivers for long before the Matabele commenced firing on them from the bush, but a searching fire from the machine-guns soon sent the natives off about their business. Food was now almost exhausted, and as a last resource one of the troop-horses was slaughtered to supply meat, which was eaten with gusto.

As they marched towards Longwe, the column passed a kraal of friendly natives, the induna of which appeared before Major Forbes and gave him much information, asserting, among other things, that the main body of the Matabele was now some distance off, and that they were only stray bands of marauders who had lately been attacking the column. In addition to this the induna supplied the hungry whites with two head of cattle, and these were immediately killed, cut up, and cooked; and the men sat down to the meal with feelings that it is impossible to describe, for this succulent beef was a welcome change from the horse-flesh and wild herbs on which they had lately been existing.

After the meal was disposed of the march was once more continued, under much rosier conditions than for some time before. The force had not proceeded more than about five miles on its way before two white men, Messrs Selous and Acutt, galloped up with the welcome tidings that the relief column under Dr Jameson, and accompanied by Mr Rhodes, who had just previously arrived at Bula-

wayo, was not more than a mile and a half away, and was pushing forward rapidly. Shortly after this the two forces met, and that night the members of Major Forbes's patrol were able to get that which they had not experienced for some months previous, —a good sound night's rest without any worry as to a Matabele attack. On the following morning the united force started for Bulawayo. It was reached after three days, during the whole of which rain fell almost incessantly.

The force had not been long at Bulawayo before information came in to the effect that Lobengula had died in his waggon on the banks of the Shangani. Rumour at first asserted that smallpox was the cause of the king's demise, but this was afterwards disproved, and the cause of death was found to be dysentery. With Lobengula died the Matabele nation as a ruling power. Hostilities almost immediately came to an end, for the impis at length came to recognise that they had met their masters, and they bowed to the inevitable, and soon some of the leading indunas arrived at Bulawayo to sue for peace. This was readily granted, and the country at once commenced to settle down. On December 23, 1893, the entire British force that had been engaged in the war paraded at Bulawayo before Mr Rhodes, who referred in complimentary terms to the manner in which they had acquitted themselves and to the many difficulties that they had faced and overcome, and the forces were then disbanded, as the work for which they were enrolled was now accomplished. So soon as this was done those of the

Salisbury and Victoria column who were intending to return to those towns set off by waggon. The Salisbury party was under the command of Captain Spreckley, while those returning to Victoria were under the command of Lieutenant Beale, and each carried a month's rations with them. The first-named party arrived at Salisbury on January 20, 1894, while Victoria was reached by the second two days previously.

On December 24 those members of the Tuli column who were returning to Johannesburg and other towns in the south left Bulawayo under the command of Captain Carr, while the Bechuanaland Border Police also set off on their return southwards, and the first Matabele war was a thing of the past. As a campaign it had been very successful: the Matabele nation, with all the horrors that it brought with it, had been broken up, and the white man ruled at Bulawayo. The troops engaged had done their work splendidly, especially when it is recollected that, with the exception of the detachment of the Bechuanaland Border Police, all the men enrolled were little more than raw levies. The cost of the war was, roughly, about £100,000,—not a tithe of what it would have been had imperial troops been employed. In Major Forbes the force had a leader of sound military judgment, who knew well both how to handle the forces that he had at his disposal and to cope with the savage foe, while personally he was brave almost to the point of recklessness.

On Christmas Day 1893 Matabeleland was judged

by the Government to be so far settled as to permit of prospecting commencing, and it was therefore thrown open for the pegging-out of gold-mining claims and farms. The country thus prepared for white colonisation was an extremely healthy one, and one that gave the promise of having a bright and prosperous future before it, and this promise has since been maintained and even strengthened.

The men who had fought in the war, and who elected to remain in Matabeleland by an agreement signed before the war commenced, which afterwards came to be known as the Victoria agreement, were to be allowed to peg out fifteen gold claims on reefs and five alluvial claims in addition to a farm of 3000 *morgen* (about 6000 acres), while it was also arranged that any loot taken should be apportioned one-half to the British South Africa Company and the other half to the officers and men in equal shares. This document was a very hastily constructed one, and in places was very ambiguously worded, but it was accepted by the Company and men in good faith, though it led to considerable unpleasantness later when the conditions came to be analysed and interpreted. So soon as the settlement of the country commenced, a force of 150 police was organised to protect the inhabitants from raids by stray bands of hostile Matabele, of which there were a few still lurking in the Matoppo Hills and along the lower courses of the Shangani, and Lieutenant Bodle was appointed to the command of this force.

In England, meanwhile, the more Radical members

of the House of Commons, under the leadership of Mr Labouchere, were doing all that they could to prevent the British South Africa Company gaining the rewards that they had earned by conquering the Matabele, and no efforts were spared to discredit Mr Rhodes and his adherents in the eyes of the country. The representative of the Colonial Office in the House of Commons at this time was the Under Secretary, Mr Sydney Buxton; and while assuring the House, and through it the nation, that the Government was keeping a close watch on events in Matabeleland, he showed but small sympathy with the rabid opponents of the Chartered Company. These statements were echoed in the House of Lords by Lord Ripon, and several communications relating to the conditions under which the newly gained territory was to be governed passed between the Colonial Office and Sir Henry Loch.

On Mr Rhodes's return to Cape Town he made a speech regarding Matabeleland which seemed to indicate the existence of some points of difference between the Imperial Government and the British South Africa Company, and the settlement of the country was greatly delayed. Finally, on May 9, 1894, an Order in Council was signed regulating the government of Matabeleland, and it was then seen that the Government had considerably modified the conditions under which the original charter was granted. The Administrator was still to be appointed by the Company, but his appointment was to be subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. To assist the Administrator in

governing the country an executive council of five was to be appointed, one member of which was to be a judge of the High Court of the country. While the will of the Executive Council was not binding on the Administrator, if he had occasion to dissent from its views in any way, he was to report his reasons for so doing to the High Commissioner at Cape Town. Any regulations promulgated by the Administrator were to have the force of law throughout the territory of the Company, provided that they had received the sanction of the High Commissioner; but the Secretary of State was to have the power to veto them at any time within twelve months of their coming into force. The power of imposing taxes was also conferred on the Company. The rights of the natives were stringently protected; and it was stated that in all legal cases where natives were concerned native law was to be used except so far as it proved contrary to the laws of morality. No exceptional legislation was to be enacted against the natives except with regard to the sale of liquor to them, which was forbidden, and to the bearing of arms by them. Land was to be set aside for their exclusive use, and a sufficiency of grazing provided, and they were not to be removed from this land except on other land of equal suitability for their purposes being provided. To all these and other conditions of lesser import the Company subscribed, and Dr Jameson was appointed the first Administrator of Matabeleland, while a scion of an old Dutch family, Mr Joseph Vintcent, was appointed the first Chief-Justice of the pro-

vince of Matabeleland, a position which he still holds.

A considerable town soon commenced to spring up around Bulawayo on the site that had been surveyed and laid out about four miles from where Lobengula's old kraal had been, and a large population began to be attracted thither owing to the richness of the gold-belts that had been discovered, the wide extent of these gold-belts, and the facility with which they could be worked. The British South Africa Company, which in the previous year had increased its capital to £2,000,000 sterling, was doing everything that lay in its power to turn their steps towards the new country, and the land seemed to be entering on a long spell of prosperity now that the Matabele had been disposed of, and if not actually crushed, at any rate overawed and cowed into submission. Personally Mr Rhodes was throwing himself heart and soul into the work of making a new colony, and one of the chief things to which he was turning his attention was the railway that was being pushed forward from Beira to Umtali, and of which about seventy miles had been constructed at this time. Compared to the railways in civilised countries this line was, of course, only a very second-rate one, but its value in the opening up of Mashonaland was increasing day by day. The gauge of the line was a very narrow one, two feet, and the passenger cars were open vehicles of the most primitive construction; but it was not so much for the conveyance of passengers as for the transport of mining machinery

and other heavy material that the line was being built, and for this it was serving its purpose admirably, for while the engines and trucks looked little more than toys they proved themselves capable of pulling very heavy loads at a fair speed.

As this railway approached Umtali it was found that it could only reach the town by some heavy engineering work, the cost of which would be exceedingly heavy ; so, on the principle that if the mountain won't come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain, it was decided to move the town of Umtali some eleven miles to the south-east, where the railway could easily reach it. This was eventually done, and a new town laid out, which was called New Umtali, in contradistinction to the old town. This method of surmounting the obstacle is said to have been originally suggested by Mr Rhodes when the position was explained to him, and certainly it savours strongly of his method of overcoming any difficulties that present themselves to him.

Mr Rhodes also about this time made an offer to the Imperial Government to insert a clause in the charter of the British South Africa Company providing that British goods imported to Africa should never be subject in the new territory of Matabeleland to duties higher than those imposed by the States within the South Africa Customs Union. When he made this proposal Mr Rhodes was contemplating the possibility of a federated South Africa from Table Bay to the shores of the Zambesi, and this offer to the Government would mean that as the South African States became

welded into one harmonious whole, large and increasing markets would be opened to British manufacturers. Somewhat inexplicably, Lord Ripon saw fit to decline to avail himself of this offer, on the ground that there was no precedent for it, thus indicating that Downing Street was still hidebound by tradition. Mr Rhodes was not unnaturally annoyed at this rebuff, and plainly showed as much in a speech on the subject which he delivered in the Cape House of Assembly, in the course of which he commented in vigorous terms on the short-sightedness of British statesmanship with regard to the Colonies — a point so obvious to students of our colonial history as to need no emphasis here.

To exploit the mineral wealth of Rhodesia numerous companies and syndicates were being formed in London about this time, many of which took over the concessions that had been granted to those who fought against the Matabele and others, and a great interest in the new country, its resources and its possibilities, was manifested in England.

Towards the end of 1894 Mr Rhodes and Dr Jameson visited England, and almost immediately on their arrival Mr Rhodes was sworn as a member of the Privy Council, while for his services during the Matabele war Dr Jameson was created a Companion of the Bath. One of the leading tasks which Mr Rhodes set himself to accomplish while in this country was to carry through the negotiations that had been commenced with the Government some little time previously for the transference to the

control of the British South Africa Company of that part of Nyssaland which had up till that time formed a protectorate of the British Crown, with Mr H. H. Johnston as Administrator. This country lay to the north of the Zambesi, and was bounded on the east by Portuguese East Africa and German East Africa; on the west by Angola; and on the north by the Congo Free State. It was practically an unknown land, but Mr Rhodes recognised its potential value, and perceived that when the trans-continental railway came to be built it would prove valuable to have the control of that part of Central Africa in his own hands. He was strongly desirous, therefore, of adding it to the dominions of the Chartered Company; while, on the other hand, the Imperial Government probably was only too glad to get the country off their hands, for ever since the protectorate had been established it had been a drain on the public purse, and in fact had it not been for the annual subsidy of £10,000, subsequently increased to £17,000, which the British South Africa Company paid to Mr (afterwards Sir Harry) Johnston, the admirable work of civilisation which that gentleman was carrying out in Central Africa could not have gone forward. As a result of the negotiations, therefore, the Government consented to the transference of the country to the British South Africa Company, with the exception of the strip of territory lying along the western shore of Lake Nyassa which is now known as the British Central Africa Protectorate, and which was retained as a Crown Colony.

In addition to the acquisition of this territory, Mr Rhodes was also pushing forward the construction of the trans-continental telegraph line, which was already demonstrating its value. This line had reached to Blantyre, the capital of the British Central Africa Protectorate, and was being carried forward towards the northern banks of Lake Tanganyika, so that Mr Rhodes was very busy.

On the return of the Administrator and Mr Rhodes to South Africa they found that the development of Rhodesia was progressing apace, and that many of the gold-reefs had already been proved payable, thus giving a direct contradiction to those in this country who iterated and reiterated that there was no gold in the country, and that if there ever had been the ancients had taken it all, and so on, *ad nauseam*. Rhodesia was, in fact, just beginning to move ahead as a colony, and a period of steady development, which lasted for nearly two years, was entered upon. At length this was broken by an event that threw the country back quite five years in its development, and was one of the indirect causes of the Matabele rebellion with its attendant horrors. We refer to the incident that has gained a world-wide celebrity under the name of the Jameson Raid.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE JAMESON RAID.

THE Jameson raid may be said to belong more properly to the history of the Transvaal than to that of Rhodesia; but seeing that the incursion was organised and prepared for in the territories under the administration of the British South Africa Company; that it was led by the Administrator of Matabeleland; that the force was composed, for a large proportion, of the men of the Matabeleland Mounted Police; and that two of the directors of the Chartered Company, Mr Rhodes and Mr Alfred Beit, were proved to have been prime movers in the affair,—it may be considered to form an important landmark in the history of Rhodesia, and one whose consequences had a far-reaching effect on both the administrative and political history of that colony.

So far as is possible the raid will be treated in these pages only as it concerned Rhodesia and its government: nevertheless, it will be necessary at times to depart from this rule and to speak of things which, while lying beyond the immediate scope of this work, yet have an important bearing on things Rhodesian.

For some years previous to 1895 a feeling had been growing up among the disfranchised Uitlanders of Johannesburg and other parts of the Transvaal that they were being very harshly treated by the Boer Government at Pretoria. As Mr Rhodes expressed it when giving evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Jameson raid, it was felt that the people "possessing more than half the land, nine-tenths of the wealth, and paying nineteen-twentieths of the taxes," should be allowed some voice in the government of the country. This, however, was resolutely denied them by the Boers, and so the discontent went on growing and gaining fresh force each day.

Shortly after the end of the Matabele war in 1893 Mr Rhodes began to turn his thoughts to the scheme that had presented itself to his mind of a federated South Africa from the Cape of Good Hope to beyond the Zambesi, but he saw that the slow moving, conservative, and altogether antiquated rule of President Kruger and his subordinates in the South Africa Republic presented an insuperable bar to this project. In 1894, while travelling through Matabeleland with Dr Jameson, Mr Rhodes came into contact with Mr John Hays Hammond, a well-known mining expert from Johannesburg, who was at that time making an exhaustive survey of the mineral deposits of Rhodesia on behalf of the British South Africa Company, and this gentleman in conversation expatiated on the injustice and the oppression under which the European population at Johannesburg and on the Rand were suffering,

and his utterances aroused the sympathies of Mr Rhodes and Dr Jameson, both of whom listened to the recitals of the wrongs of the Uitlander population and the grievances under which they laboured with the very deepest interest. It may be said that it was owing in a great measure to these conversations with Mr Hammond that Mr Rhodes first conceived the idea of attempting to assist the Uitlanders to cast off the yoke which bowed them down, and to gain that freedom which is the undeniable birthright of every Englishman; and in these ideas he found a willing seconder in Dr Jameson. Even at this time Mr Hammond, who was a well-known and highly respected figure in Johannesburg, foresaw what the upshot would be, and he distinctly asserted that unless the economic conditions of the Rand were altered, there would be a general rising of the Europeans, and an internecine struggle would ensue.

In October 1894 Dr Jameson was returning to the Cape, and went, as was customary in those days before the opening of the through railway line to Rhodesia, *via* Pretoria and Johannesburg. In the latter town he stayed for some short time, and there verified the correctness of the views which Mr Hammond had enunciated, and found that the Uitlanders were in a state of simmering discontent. Here it may be remarked that Dr Jameson did not make his investigations among capitalists or others who might be presumed to have ulterior motives in fomenting an upheaval, but rather preferred to mix with the white men working on the mines, and to find there what the real opinion was

among those who had nothing financially to gain by a revolution, but rather something to lose. Here he found that the prevailing opinion was that the conditions under which they lived were intolerable, and must sooner or later be put an end to—by constitutional means if possible, and if not, then by force. That was the prevailing view among all classes in the Transvaal in the autumn of 1894.

On leaving the Transvaal Dr Jameson went to Cape Town, where he met Mr Rhodes and told him what the real position in Johannesburg was. The words of Dr Jameson, who had been in Africa for twenty years, carried great weight with Mr Rhodes, and he at once decided, in view of eventualities, to have the Rhodesian police and volunteers brought to as high a state of efficiency as was possible, and in this he was ably seconded by Dr Jameson.

Things continued like this for about a year, during which time the negotiations went on with the Colonial Office for the transfer to the British South Africa Company of the Bechuanaland Protectorate; and these resulted in a strip of land along the border of the South Africa Republic being handed over to the Company. In the early months of 1895 a volunteer force, called the Rhodesia Horse, was formed among the settlers in Bulawayo and equipped by the Chartered Company. The corps was 1000 strong and was commanded by Colonel Spreckley, the purpose for which it was raised being the defence of the country and the protection of the settlers. In the autumn of this year (1895) Mr Rhodes decided to move a force of the Matabeleland Mounted Police

from Bulawayo to the little village of Pitsani, which was situated on the borders of the Transvaal in the recently acquired strip of territory. At this time the idea of Mr Rhodes was—and this was his intention right up to the finish—to keep this force within about three days' march of Johannesburg, so that, when the inhabitants of that town made the effort that had been decided upon to overthrow the Boer Government and vindicate their rights, this force would swiftly cross the border-line and aid in restoring order. This was the genesis of the movement that culminated in the raid. In itself this projected invasion of the Transvaal by an armed force would have been, of course, far from right; but had the Uitlanders been in any grave danger from their Boer oppressors and bloodshed likely to take place, it is not in the nature of things to suppose that Englishmen in South Africa would have calmly stood by and seen their brethren shot down by the Boers without raising a hand to assist them, and intervention under these circumstances would have been easily condoned. It was under very different conditions that the Jameson raid actually occurred. The detachment of police sent down to Pitsani was under the command of Major Sir John Willoughby, and from the date of their arrival to the time of the raid events moved very rapidly. The Chartered Company had taken over the Bechuanaland Border Police on its disbandment by the Crown, and this force was held at Mafeking in readiness to act in conjunction with Dr Jameson's force.

Mr Rhodes had by this time entered fully into the

efforts of what was styled the "Reform Committee" of Johannesburg, of which his brother, Colonel Francis Rhodes, was one of the moving spirits, and was aiding the movement with both his influence and his purse. He promised the reformers that so soon as they were prepared to act, a force under Dr Jameson should immediately cross the border to their assistance. At first this force was to consist of 1200 strong, but this number was afterwards considerably reduced. On their part the Uitlanders in Johannesburg were to rise and make a dash for the Government arsenal at Pretoria, which was in a semi-unprotected condition, to take possession of the arms therein, and then to fall back on Johannesburg to await the arrival of Dr Jameson and his troops, and the coming of Mr Rhodes, who promised to bring Sir Hercules Robinson, the High Commissioner, up from Cape Town to mediate between the Uitlanders and the Boers. A quantity of arms was also smuggled into Johannesburg by means of the De Beers Company, of which Mr Rhodes was the controlling spirit, though the quantity was nothing like sufficient to arm the Uitlanders in an efficient manner. In October of this year Dr Jameson paid another visit to Johannesburg to see how events were progressing, and then went forward to Cape Town to meet Mr Rhodes and to report to him how matters were proceeding in what the Poet Laureate has styled "the golden city." It was then that the arrangements for the support of the now imminent rising in Johannesburg were completed. Dr Jameson was to be ready to start for Johannesburg with a

force of 800 men so soon as the news reached him of the Uitlanders having risen. Dr Jameson then returned to Pitsani, and about the middle of December, when the transfer of the Bechuanaland Border Police to the British South Africa Company was completed, everything was ready for the movement.

While he was in Johannesburg Dr Jameson had procured a letter from the members of the Reform Committee which was destined to play an important part in subsequent events. This letter was signed by Colonel Rhodes and Messrs C. Leonard, L. Phillips, J. H. Hammond, and G. Farrar, and was couched in the following terms : " Thousands of unarmed men, women, and children of our race will be at the mercy of well - armed Boers, while property of enormous value will be in the greatest peril. We cannot contemplate the future without the gravest apprehension, and feel that we are justified in taking any steps to prevent the shedding of blood and to ensure the protection of our rights. It is under these circumstances that we feel constrained to call upon you to come to our aid should disturbances arise here. The circumstances are so extreme that we cannot but believe that you, and the men under you, will not fail to come to the rescue of people who would be so situated. We guarantee any expense that may reasonably be incurred by you in helping us, and ask to believe that nothing but the sternest necessity has prompted this appeal."

This letter, which Dr Jameson obtained in November, and which was dated for the 20th of that

month, was handed to him, according to the account afterwards given by the Reform Committee, to exculpate him with the Chartered Company should he go into the Transvaal, but was distinctly not intended as an invitation, and later he was warned not to go in on that letter without receiving a definite summons from Johannesburg. Dr Jameson, however, decided to make that letter the basis of his action, and to serve this purpose the date was altered to December 20 so as to make it appear that it was written just previous to the raid. There is no excuse for an action like this, the changing of the date; but if the facts stated in the letter were correct at the end of November, they were just as true at the end of December, though in the meantime the signatories had repudiated it and asked Dr Jameson not to act upon it.

The rising at Johannesburg was finally fixed to take place about the end of December, but differences began to present themselves as the time for talking passed and that for action drew near. President Kruger, who, as it afterwards turned out, was not so ignorant as to the turn things were taking as he was supposed to be, seemed to show himself disposed to listen to the complaints of the Uitlander population, and this served in some degree to cool the ardour for revolution in Johannesburg. In addition, a serious difficulty arose about the flag which was to be hoisted in Johannesburg when the revolution was effected. Mr Rhodes was firm in his intention that it should be the union-jack that was used, and in this he had the support of practically the whole of the Britishers

in the republic; but there were those Uitlanders of other countries, principally Germans and Americans, who objected to this, and held that it should be the flag of the South Africa Republic that should be used, as they intended that the republic should still be maintained, though they wished to reorganise it on a representative basis, and they had strong objections to seeing the Transvaal become a British colony. Mr Rhodes remained firm in his intention, however, and a cleavage soon began to appear, and the rising was several times postponed, until at length it seemed plain that it would never take place at all. So obvious was this last fact, that on December 28 Mr Rhodes, in conversation with Sir Graham Bowyer, the Imperial Secretary to the High Commissioner, stated that, so far as he could see, the rising in Johannesburg "had fizzled out like a damp squib."

Dr Jameson at Pitsani was rapidly losing patience at the continual delay, for he knew that rumours as to the real reason for his presence on the Transvaal border were commencing to get about, and he feared that the Boers would begin to mass a force to intercept his march to Johannesburg unless he moved quickly. So he at length decided, to quote the expressive phraseology of Mr Rhodes, "to take the bit between his teeth," and by crossing the border to precipitate matters, and, as he hoped, thus force Johannesburg to rise. On December 28 the Doctor telegraphed to Mr Rhodes at Cape Town as follows: "Unless I hear definitely to the contrary, shall leave to-morrow evening." On the following day, December 29, he again wired to Mr Rhodes, "Shall leave

to-night for the Transvaal." By some delay on the telegraph lines these two telegrams did not reach Mr Rhodes until the morning of the 29th December, when they were delivered together. Mr Rhodes at once attempted to wire to Dr Jameson to forbid his departure, but found that the wires had been cut, and that it was impossible for him to get his message through. Mr Rhodes then gave up the attempt and returned to his house, fully aware that Dr Jameson, by his impetuous action, had ruined everything.

Previous to starting, Dr Jameson had called his men together and read the letter to them that he had received a month before from Johannesburg (the date of which had been altered as we have seen), and this done, he told them that it was his intention to march straight to Johannesburg in response to that petition. The force then crossed the border, and after going for about eleven miles was joined by the Bechuanaland Border Police from Mafeking. Even with this addition the force was very much less than it had been intended it should be, for, all told, it only numbered 515 men, with eight Maxims, one 12½-pounder gun, and two 7-pounders. The force was under the command of Major Sir John Willoughby, while the other principal officers were Major the Hon. Robert White, Colonel R. Grey, Colonel the Hon. Hy. White, and Captain the Hon. C. Coventry. No sooner had the Transvaal been entered by this force than the Boers began to collect to oppose them, and it was then seen that the Government at Pretoria had been

prepared for this step, and had long had its plans laid for defeating it.

So soon as Mr Rhodes realised that the fat was in the fire, to use a colloquial expression, he went to Sir Graham Bowyer and showed him the two telegrams that he had received from Dr Jameson, and also told him how his efforts to prevent the advance had been checkmated by the wire having been cut. Sir Graham Bowyer, in his turn, on the morning of Monday the 30th December reported the raid to Sir Hercules Robinson, who at once telegraphed to the British representative in the republic to ascertain whether the force had really crossed the border, and if so, to despatch a messenger at once to order its return; while on the following day the High Commissioner issued a proclamation publicly repudiating Dr Jameson's action in the name of the British Government, and calling upon all British subjects to refrain from aiding or abetting the force in any shape or form.

Mr Rhodes attempted, unsuccessfully, to prevent, or at anyrate delay, the publication of this proclamation, on the grounds that it outlawed Dr Jameson and his followers, and left them at the mercy of the Boers should they be taken prisoners. The High Commissioner recognised the correctness of this, but he had first of all his duty to his country to perform, and that duty demanded that the Government should instantly be vindicated of any suspicion of violating a friendly State, and the proclamation was therefore issued.

On crossing the frontier Dr Jameson's first step

had been to cut the telegraph wire between Mafeking and Cape Town so as to prevent any recall reaching him, and also the one to Pretoria to prevent the news of his departure being sent to the Boer Government. Misfortune, however, seemed to dog the raiders from their first step, for the troopers who were detailed for this latter duty, the cutting of the Pretoria wire, called at a wayside store, where they dallied until they forgot the errand for which they had been despatched. When they left this place they had a confused idea of having been sent out to cut some wire or another, so they set to work on the first piece of wire they came across, which happened to be a portion of a fence, and the telegraph line to Pretoria was thus left open.

The news of the raid seemed to completely crush Mr Rhodes, and, as was afterwards stated, for some days he appeared to be completely broken down. He was at this time Prime Minister of Cape Colony, but he realised that he would be forced from this office, and that in all probability his political life was at an end. He retired to Groot Schuur, his house on the outskirts of Cape Town, where he shut himself up for some days and declined to take any part in the repudiation of Dr Jameson. His attitude towards the Doctor was well summed up in the broken words to which he gave expression when he first heard of the raid, "Poor old Jameson! We have been friends for twenty years, and now he has ruined me!" for at that time it seemed as if nothing but utter ruin was before the greatest man that Africa has yet discovered. At length the reserve

strength of Mr Rhodes's nature came to his assistance, and he so far emerged from his retreat as to telegraph to Colonel Spreckley, the commanding officer of the Rhodesia Horse, on no account to move his force to Dr Jameson's assistance, as there seemed a likelihood of his doing; but Mr Rhodes continued firm in his refusal of the demands of the Colonial Office that he should make a public disavowal of any complicity in the raid. It is clear that Dr Jameson took the step he did entirely without the sanction, or even the knowledge, of Mr Rhodes, but the latter was not the one to shield himself behind the mistakes of others.

As for the march of Dr Jameson, his refusal to turn back, the battle of Krugersdorp, and the subsequent ambush and surrender at Doornkop, these are matters that are too well known to need lengthy repetition here. So soon as Dr Jameson saw that there was no aid to be expected from Johannesburg, and that the men and their horses were tired out and in no condition to maintain a fight with the Boers, whose forces were being augmented each moment, he surrendered to Commandant Cronje on the latter giving a declaration that he would "spare the life of you and yours." The Boers promptly went back on this condition so soon as the Englishmen were disarmed and in their power, on the grounds that Commandant Cronje had no authority to make it, and the raiders were at once marched off to Pretoria jail. In this action Dr Jameson had lost twenty-seven men killed and wounded, among the latter being Captain Coventry, while the loss of

the Boers amounted to two killed in action and two more accidentally shot by their fellows.

The news of this raid was received in London with the greatest astonishment, and there was at first a strong feeling in favour of Dr Jameson, principally brought about by the publication in the 'Times' of the "women and children" letter. It was in the height of this wave of sympathy that the Poet Laureate wrote his unfortunate verses that were made the object of so much unfriendly criticism. When the real action of Dr Jameson began to be realised, as it was then understood by those not intimate with South African affairs, the feeling of the public turned against him, and he was rather severely handled for having entered a friendly State. Soon after this there was another reaction in the public mind, principally brought about by the extremely ill-advised telegram which the German Emperor despatched congratulating President Kruger on having defeated the raiders. This telegram, which has since become famous, was couched as follows: "I express to you my sincere congratulations that, without appealing to the help of friendly Powers, you and your people have succeeded in repelling with your own forces the armed bands which had broken into your country, and in maintaining the independence of your country against foreign aggression." So soon as this telegram was sent off Germany approached Portugal for permission to land a force of marines at Delagoa Bay, "to protect German interests"; but leave to do this was refused.

This telegram seemed to recognise the South

Africa Republic as an independent Power, and hinted that Germany was prepared to aid her to cast off the suzerainty of this country, and a storm of indignation was at once aroused. A "special service squadron" of the Royal Navy, composed of ships of the most modern build, was organised, equipped, and put to sea in record time, and it seemed for a few days as though war with Germany was inevitable.

To return to the Transvaal,—soon after the surrender of Dr Jameson, Sir Jacobus de Wet, who was the British representative at Pretoria, visited Johannesburg with the object of pacifying that town, which had become very excited at the news of Dr Jameson's defeat when almost within reach of it, and after some little time he induced the Reform leaders to consent to a disarmament of the town, on the distinct understanding that the reforms which they demanded should be granted, and, further, that "not a hair of their head should be touched." At the very moment that this undertaking was given, President Kruger was debating with himself whether he should shoot the raiders at once, or hand them over to the British authorities to deal with. Fortunately for himself and his people, the Boer president was shrewd enough to see that if he went to extremities not even the implied help of Germany would have prevented Great Britain invading his territory and inflicting a summary punishment for the death of the raiders, and he therefore handed over his prisoners to be tried in London.

This done, the president turned his wrath upon

Johannesburg and the Reform Committee, the members of which he arrested despite the promise of Sir Jacobus de Wet that they should not be touched; while, owing to the amount of arms surrendered not coming up to that quantity which he had been led by the Uitlanders' boasts to believe that they possessed, he hinted at an attack on the town should the remainder not be quickly delivered up, and it took a strong warning from Sir Hercules Robinson to cause him to modify his attitude in this respect.

As for the prisoners who were being brought home to be tried, the utmost secrecy was observed as to the precise time and place of their arrival, as the authorities wished to avoid anything in the nature of a demonstration, which might be wrongfully interpreted in Pretoria, and so tend to accentuate an already strained situation. The prisoners were eventually conveyed up the Thames in a small launch to Waterloo Pier, where they were landed almost unobserved. When they were brought up at Bow Street police-station on charges under the Foreign Enlistment Act, there was a great crowd of fashionable and well-dressed personages in the court whose sympathy with the prisoners was shown in a most ill-judged outburst of cheering when they entered, which called forth a severe and well-merited reproof from the presiding magistrate, Sir John Bridge. After a preliminary trial here, the prisoners were committed to appear at the bar of the High Court to answer for their offence. This second trial commenced on July 20, 1896, before a court composed of the Lord Chief-Justice of Eng.

land (Lord Russell of Killowen), Baron Pollock, and Mr Justice Hawkins. After a trial which lasted about a week, Lord Russell commenced to sum up, and in his desire to be free from any suspicion of partiality towards the prisoners, the learned judge unfortunately seemed to err in the opposite direction, and he treated the men before him as though they were common malefactors rather than political prisoners. The jury were naturally influenced by the judge's severe condemnation, but they could not help recognising that had it not been for the oppressive and utterly corrupt Government of the South Africa Republic this raid would never have taken place, and to their verdict of guilty they attached a rider stating that in their opinion the state of things which prevailed at Johannesburg presented great provocation. This verdict was delivered on July 28, and Dr Jameson was at once sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment, Sir John Willoughby to ten months, Major White to seven months, and Colonel H. White, Colonel Grey, and Captain Coventry to five months each, all without hard labour. With regard to the last-named prisoner, as already stated, he had been badly wounded, indeed he was first reported as dead, and he was released almost immediately; while Dr Jameson's health, which had been undermined as much by the worry and anxiety of the previous few months as by exposure, shortly afterwards broke down, and he was released in the following December, it being considered dangerous to keep him in confinement longer.

In Pretoria, on the 24th April, the members of the Reform Committee, headed by Colonel Rhodes, Mr Lionel Phillips, Mr George Farrar, and Mr John Hays Hammond, were put on their trial charged with high treason before a judge who had been specially imported from the Orange Free State to try them. All pleaded guilty, and the four gentlemen mentioned above were sentenced to death, while the remainder were fined £2000 each, with two years' imprisonment, and banishment from the State for three years. The barbarous sentence on the four leaders was received with consternation throughout South Africa and in this country, and Mr Chamberlain at once telegraphed to President Kruger a message in which he expressed his conviction that the sentence would not be carried out. While couched in polite terms, this telegram plainly hinted what the next step would be if the conspirators were executed. President Kruger, however, was only playing his favourite game of "bluff," to use an expressive Americanism, of the same character as that with which he has so long and so successfully fought the efforts of this country to obtain justice for the Uitlanders, and never had the least intention of carrying out this sentence, which, after a few weeks' delay,—during which the prisoners were herded together like so many cattle in Pretoria jail, a spot of the most insanitary description,—was commuted to fifteen years' imprisonment, and the lesser offenders were released on payment of their fines, and an undertaking being given not to meddle with the political affairs of the Transvaal for

some years to come. The sentence on the leaders was still further commuted on June 10, 1896, when they were released on the payment of fines of £25,000 each, and giving an undertaking not to interfere with the politics of the country for a period of fifteen years. Three of the prisoners signed this condition, but Colonel Rhodes refused, and was thereupon compelled to leave the country.

CHAPTER IX.

THE JAMESON RAID COMMITTEE.

THE Jameson Raid was the subject of frequent debates in Parliament, which became somewhat acrimonious at times. Soon after the raid there were sinister rumours afloat to the effect that some of the heads of the Colonial Office had been for some time previous to the incursion well aware that it was about to take place, but these rumours were promptly disproved by the Colonial Secretary, whose handling throughout of a most delicate task evoked the praise of even his parliamentary adversaries. In these discussions and questions on the raid and its results Mr Labouchere early became conspicuous by the virulence of his attacks on Mr Rhodes, the Chartered Company, Rhodesia, and indeed anything that was connected, however indirectly, with the raiders. This gentleman had long been known to entertain a dislike that almost amounted to enmity of Mr Rhodes and his works, so that his attitude on this occasion did not cause so much comment or attention as it otherwise might have done. Mr Labouchere, almost immediately the raid happened, developed a theory that it

was arranged with the sole object of influencing the London Stock Exchange for the immediate pecuniary advantage of the raiders and their friends, and he attempted to make all the facts that were disclosed fit in with this theory instead of constructing a theory to fit the facts; but in this he received but scant support, even from his own party.

When Mr Rhodes first heard that Dr Jameson was to be sent to England to take his trial, he at once announced his intention of returning to England likewise, where he would, to use his own characteristic expression, "face the music." Before leaving for these shores Mr Rhodes had made a tour of Cape Colony, where he had been received with ovations at every town in which he stayed. Not only among the British colonists was Mr Rhodes *fêted*, but even in the Dutch strongholds of the colony, where one would have thought that he would have been but coolly received, the welcome given him was spontaneous and cordial to a degree, and he was soon convinced that, so far as Cape Colony was concerned, his political career, instead of being at an end, was in reality only just commencing. About this time the Cape Parliament had appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the causes of the Jameson raid as affecting that colony, and he, Mr Rhodes, knew that he would be severely handled; but when a man has the people of a State at his back, history has shown us that he can disregard the Government.

Mr Rhodes arrived in London on February 4, 1896, and on the 6th he paid a visit to the Colonial Office, where he had an interview with Mr Chamber-

lain at which the condition of affairs were discussed. Regarding the future administration of Rhodesia, Mr Rhodes declared that the Chartered Company was perfectly prepared to place their forces of a military character under the Imperial Government, but urged that magisterial, judicial, and civil officers should be appointed as heretofore. In this view Mr Chamberlain concurred, and stated that he did not support the demand for the revocation of the charter. With regard to the inquiry which it was then proposed to hold in England concerning the raid, Mr Rhodes suggested that there was no need for it, in view of the then imminent trial of Dr Jameson and his followers, when all the facts would appear; and Mr Chamberlain agreed that he did not see any urgent necessity for the inquiry. But, added the Colonial Secretary, the House of Commons might insist upon it, in which case he would not oppose the proposition. This interview over, Mr Rhodes found that his presence was not absolutely necessary in England at that time, so on the 10th February he left for South Africa.

In spite of the inquiry in Cape Town, it was felt in England that the Imperial Government should conduct a searching investigation into the whole affair, more especially when it was seen that the Cape Committee were of the opinion that the principal officials in South Africa of the Chartered Company, with two of the directors, Mr Rhodes and Mr A. Beit, either knew of the raid beforehand or were in a position to do so. The two directors, the report went on, were, together with the Administrator of Matabeleland, Dr

Jameson, and Dr Harris, the South African secretary of the Company, active as promoters and moving spirits throughout, and were from time to time kept informed of the preparations. The date of the inroad was fixed weeks beforehand, and in fact the whole movement was largely engineered and financed from outside, and in both cases certain directors of the Chartered Company of British South Africa were prominent throughout. The committee also found that Mr Rhodes, in taking an active part in the affair, had been guilty of a proceeding "inconsistent with his duties as Prime Minister of this colony."

The tenor of this report when published in England led to the demands for a Government inquiry being redoubled, and the Cabinet at length acceded to the demand. The precise form of the tribunal to hear the evidence was a matter which led to some little debate. Mr Balfour rather inclined to a Royal Commission being appointed to go into the whole matter; but the Opposition, led by Sir William Harcourt, urged that a Select Committee of the House of Commons was the fittest form of inquiry. This latter was ultimately adopted; and on January 29, 1897, a committee of fifteen members, being nine from the Ministerial side and six from the Opposition, was appointed "to inquire into the origin and circumstances of the incursion into the South Africa Republic by an armed force, and into the administration of the British South Africa Company, and to report thereon; and further, to report what alterations are desirable in the government of the territories under the control of the Company." The following

gentlemen were elected members of the Committee: The Attorney - General (Sir Richard Webster), Mr Bigham, Mr Blake, Mr Sydney Buxton, Sir Henry Campbell - Bannerman, the Colonial Secretary (Mr Chamberlain), the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir Michael Hicks-Beach), Mr Cripps, Sir William Hart-Dyke, Mr John Ellis, Sir William Harcourt, Mr W. L. Jackson, Mr Labouchere, Mr Wharton, and Mr George Wyndham. This committee first met on the 5th February, when Mr Jackson was elected to the chair, and the procedure to be adopted was decided upon. Leave was given for the British South Africa Company and its directors to be represented by counsel,—a privilege that was also extended to Mr Rhodes, Mr Beit, Dr Jameson, Mr Lionel Phillips, and Dr Rutherford Harris, while it was refused in the cases of Mr W. B. Ingram and the African-Portuguese Syndicate, both of whom sought to raise questions that were decidedly outside the matters which the committee was appointed to investigate.

Mr Rhodes was the first witness to appear before the committee, he having returned to England for that purpose, and he was subjected to a long examination by Sir William Harcourt. At the commencement of his evidence he read a statement that he had prepared in which he recapitulated the burdens under which the Uitlander population had suffered since the establishment of the gold-mining industry around Johannesburg. "After long effort," Mr Rhodes proceeded, "the Uitlanders despaired of obtaining redress by constitutional means," and as he felt that the persistently unfriendly attitude of the

Government of the South African Republic towards the Cape Colony was the great obstacle to common action for practical purposes among the various States of South Africa, he "assisted the movement in Johannesburg with his purse and influence." After this frank declaration Mr Rhodes made what he must have realised later was a most unfortunate remark. "Acting within my rights," he said, "I placed on territory under the administration of the British South Africa Company, upon the borders of the Transvaal, a body of troops under Dr Jameson prepared to act in the Transvaal in certain eventualities." As regarded the rights of Mr Rhodes to place a body of troops on the borders of a friendly State with the ultimate object of an invasion, this remark was of course indefensible, and he was subjected to a severe cross-examination by Sir William Harcourt on this point. In explaining the expression away, Mr Rhodes seemed to hint that it was rather his right as managing director of the British South Africa Company to move troops about in Rhodesia that he was referring to.

The evidence of Mr Rhodes may be divided into three portions — the influence of the Uitlander grievances upon his conduct and policy; the direct assertion that Dr Jameson entered the Transvaal without his authority; and the concealment of his views and plans from the Board of Directors of the British South Africa Company. Mr Rhodes stated, after asserting that Dr Jameson entered upon the raid without his authority or knowledge, that he was willing generally to accept the finding of the Cape

Committee as being correct as to facts. In concluding his statement, Mr Rhodes said that in all his actions he was greatly influenced by the belief that the policy of the Government of the South Africa Republic was to introduce the influence of another foreign Power—obviously Germany—into the already complicated system of South African politics, and thereby render it more difficult in the future for the closer union of the different States.

In reference to the “women and children” letter which Mr Rhodes had cabled home for publication in the ‘Times,’ Sir William Harcourt attempted to draw an admission from him that the object of its publication was to make it the ground for Dr Jameson’s action; but this Mr Rhodes resolutely denied, though confronted with a telegram that he had sent to the Chartered Company immediately after the raid in which he seemed to hint that it was through this letter that Dr Jameson crossed the border. He now asserted, however, that the only object of its publication was to show that there had been communications between the Uitlanders and Dr Jameson. Questioned as to whether the High Commissioner had ever been informed by him as to what he was doing, Mr Rhodes answered in the negative, and admitted that when in the autumn of 1895 Sir Hercules Robinson had asked him why the force was being collected on the Transvaal border, he replied that it was to protect the railway line then being constructed, and for economy, as the troops could be kept much more cheaply at Pitsani and Mafeking than they could at Bulawayo.

When at length Sir William Harcourt came to the end of his examination, Mr Rhodes was successively questioned by most of the other members of the committee, but nothing that was altogether new was gathered. Mr Labouchere's cross-examination of Mr Rhodes had been looked forward to with interest by the general public, but when the turn of the member for Northampton came his questions fell very flat, and were mostly confined to trying to force Mr Rhodes to admit that the whole thing had been organised and carried through to enable him and his friends to make money on the Stock Exchange; but in this Mr Labouchere proved a dismal failure, and of the two Mr Rhodes decidedly came out of the bout the better. After an examination lasting for six days Mr Rhodes was released from further attendance, and he was free to return to Rhodesia, which he immediately did.

After Mr Rhodes came two Dutch members of the Cape House of Assembly, Messrs Louw and Ventner, who had volunteered their evidence, which dealt principally with the future government of Rhodesia. Both gentlemen were strongly of the opinion that it would be unwise to revoke the charter, as the settlers in the country were well satisfied with the rule of the Company, and the general opinion of the Cape Colony was that colonial control of Rhodesia was far preferable to government by imperial officers. This view, it may be mentioned, was also the one expressed by the Cape Assembly in the session of 1896, when Mr Merriman introduced a motion to the effect that the exercise of sovereign rights by a

trading and financial company such as the British South Africa Company was not consistent with the peace and prosperity of South Africa, and that an address should be presented to her Majesty praying for the revocation or alteration of the charter. A long debate took place on this motion, but when the division was taken it only found eleven supporters in a house of seventy-six members, and was therefore thrown out by a majority of sixty-five votes.

The next witness was Sir Graham Bowyer, who under cross-examination admitted that he was cognisant of the plans of Mr Rhodes, but did not divulge them to the High Commissioner because he considered himself bound by a pledge of secrecy. After this confession his resignation of his position as imperial secretary to the High Commissioner followed in a short time as a matter of course.

The evidence of Mr William Schreiner was next taken. This gentleman, who was of Dutch extraction, had been Attorney-General under Mr Rhodes, and his evidence was valuable so far as it related to the future government of Rhodesia. Examined by Sir William Harcourt, he expressed the opinion that while he thought that the control of Rhodesia should still remain in the hands of the British South Africa Company, yet there should be an imperial officer in supreme control in the country, paid by the Imperial Government, and to whom the Imperial Government could look for an explanation should anything untoward occur. As a matter of fact, this had already been done in a limited sense, the control of the

police and other armed forces in Rhodesia having been taken out of the hands of the Chartered Company and placed under the command of an imperial officer, Sir Richard Martin. Having spoken with a great many people who had lived in Rhodesia, Mr Schreiner gathered that they did not at all desire the charter to be abrogated. They were more or less contented with the Company's government, and he thought that their views deserved a very great deal of consideration. Cross-examined by Mr Chamberlain, Mr Schreiner agreed that on many occasions President Kruger had attempted to infringe or evade the conditions imposed upon him by the treaties of 1881 and 1884.

Following Mr Schreiner came Dr Jameson, who added very little to what had been disclosed at his trial some months previously. The most important statement that he made, perhaps, was the remark that his hand was to a certain extent forced by rumours which reached him of the secret arming and the warlike preparations that were taking place in Johannesburg, thereby indicating that he feared the Uitlanders would rise and throw off the Boer control without him. Mr Blake in his cross-examination of Dr Jameson tried to elicit an admission that the Rhodesia Horse, a volunteer force, was to have marched down to the Transvaal to support him, and that it had, in fact, been organised with that end in view. But this was denied, and Dr Jameson stated that the only use which would have been made of the force would have been to parade it at Bulawayo as a significant hint to Pre-

toria. "It was merely," said the witness, "for moral effect."

Dr Jameson having given his evidence, he was succeeded by a string of directors of the Chartered Company, the Board of which at the time of the raid was composed as follows: Duke of Abercorn (president), Duke of Fife, K.T., Earl Grey, Lord Gifford, V.C., Mr Rhodes, Mr A. Beit, Mr George Cawston, and Mr Rochefort Maguire, who acted on the Board as Mr Rhodes's representative while that gentleman was in South Africa. Of these gentlemen all appeared in the witness-box save Earl Grey, who was at that time acting as Administrator at Bulawayo. Each one except Mr Beit gave most emphatic denials to having had any knowledge that the raid was being organised: the Duke of Fife was especially indignant, and roundly asserted that Mr Rhodes had deceived him.

The Duke of Abercorn, as president of the Company, was asked by the chairman of the committee if he could give any information as to the formation of the Rhodesia Horse, and the reasons that led to the corps being raised, for there was still a lingering doubt in the minds of some of the members that it had been raised with the intention of using it in the Transvaal. But the Duke of Abercorn denied this, and stated that it was formed in the early part of the year 1895, on the recommendation of Mr Rhodes and Dr Jameson, in view of the extension of the Company's responsibilities north of the Zambesi, and for the purpose of maintaining a properly armed force within its territories,—an obligation imposed upon it

by the charter ; and that it was formed and equipped under the authority of the Board on a resolution passed as early as December 12, 1894.

When Mr Labouchere came to cross-examine the Duke of Abercorn, he tried to show that by the twenty-ninth article of the charter, witness, the Duke of Fife, and Earl Grey were placed on the British South Africa Company with the object of protecting the Government interest ; but he was speedily set right by Mr Chamberlain, who showed that what really occurred was that, when the Company applied for its charter, the Government of the day suggested that, as a public safeguard, the original Board should be strengthened by the addition of persons of independence and influence, and that the names of the three gentlemen mentioned above were suggested by the Company as fulfilling that condition, and with the approval of the Government their names were added to the Board, but that they differed in no respect from the remainder of the directors, save that they were not liable to retire in rotation ; and in this statement the Colonial Secretary was corroborated by the Duke of Abercorn. In reply to further questions, this witness admitted that shortly after the formation of the Company a very wide power of attorney was given to Mr Rhodes, and that he was authorised to do whatever he considered best for the Company, without previous reference to the Board in London, and out of this statement a minority of the committee strived to make capital. But it was obvious to all who took the trouble to consider the question that this was the only course for the directors to

pursue if the Company was to be made a success, for Mr Rhodes being as it were on the spot, and knowing the country and the natives as he did, was in a far better position to judge as to the measures necessary to be adopted than were the directors sitting in the board-room in far-away London, so that the attempt of Mr Labouchere and his colleagues in this respect fell very flat.

After Sir John Willoughby had appeared in the witness-box, Mr Beit and Dr Rutherford Harris, who had acted in the affair as the confidential agent of Mr Rhodes, came to be examined; and it was seen that they were both entangled in the plot, though, like Mr Rhodes, they had no idea that Dr Jameson was about to cross the frontier until he actually did so. After the examination of other minor witnesses, prominent among whom was Miss Flora Shaw, one of the colonial correspondents of the 'Times,' and who had had a limited knowledge of Mr Rhodes's plans, the evidence closed; but not before Mr Chamberlain had gone into the witness-box and given an emphatic denial to the insinuations of Dr Harris to the effect that he, Dr Harris, had in some of his conversations with the Colonial Secretary endeavoured "by guarded allusions" to show him what the real reasons were for placing Dr Jameson's force on the Transvaal border. By his evidence Mr Chamberlain completely exculpated himself and the whole of the permanent officials of the Colonial Office from any suspicion of complicity, though Mr Labouchere afterwards professed to have doubts on the point.

Towards the end of the sittings of the committee

there were several rather stormy scenes, the first of which occurred when Sir John Willoughby absolutely declined to answer a question of Mr Labouchere's as to the grounds he had for assuring his officers that in the event of their success "they would not be bothered by anybody." This breeze over, another and more serious question arose a few days later when Dr Harris, in the course of his evidence, hotly complained to the committee that one of their number (Mr Labouchere) had libelled him, first in the House of Commons and afterwards in his journal 'Truth,' and in the columns of a French journal 'La Gaulois,' by saying that he had been engaged in "bear" transactions on the Stock Exchange, and had used the raid for his own enrichment. Dr Harris denied this charge *in toto*, and asked the committee to either compel Mr Labouchere—who seemed fated to act the part of the stormy petrel all through—to substantiate his words or else withdraw them; meanwhile the witness declined to answer any questions addressed to him by his accuser. After considering the question the committee called upon Mr Labouchere to prove his words, and this he at first professed his entire willingness to do, but on the following day he wrote a letter to the chairman, saying that he was prepared to apologise and withdraw the charge since his informant, "a gentleman of high position and great business experience," declined to come forward. This at once caused Mr Labouchere to appear discredited, and to be regarded with a certain amount of suspicion, for one who had erred once might err again. The proceedings had

now lost all public interest, and witnesses seemed to be able to do much as they pleased about answering any awkward questions that were put to them.

When Mr Hawksley, the solicitor to the British South Africa Company and to Mr Rhodes, appeared as a witness, he was called upon to produce certain telegrams which he had from the latter, and this he refused to do, on the ground that by complying with the demand he would be violating professional confidence. He offered, indeed, to cable out to Mr Rhodes and ask for his consent to the messages being produced; but Mr Rhodes declined to allow him to do so, and therefore Mr Hawksley had no option but to defy the committee, which he did, despite threats of reporting him to the House of Commons. Seeing that he remained firm, the committee decided to proceed without the telegrams, in spite of the protests of Mr Blake, who indignantly retired from the committee in consequence. The latter part of the evidence having been hurried through, the committee were in a position to consider their report, which was finally presented to the House on July 27, 1897. There were two reports submitted—one signed by the majority of the committee, and a minority report drawn up by Mr Labouchere, who was unrepentant to the last.

The former document was a very mildly worded one, and commenced with a condensation of the evidence. Regarding the responsibility for the raid, they found that whatever justification there might have been for the action on the part of the people of Johannesburg, there was none for the conduct

of a person in Mr Rhodes's position in subsidising, organising, and stimulating an armed insurrection, and in employing the forces of the British South Africa Company for that purpose. Although Dr Jameson "went in," the report continued, "without Mr Rhodes's authority, it was always a part of the plan that these forces should be used in the Transvaal in support of an insurrection. Nothing could justify the use of such a force, and Mr Rhodes's heavy responsibility remained, they considered, although Dr Jameson had at the last moment invaded the Transvaal without his sanction." The committee were of the opinion that of the directors of the British South Africa Company who appeared before them, only Mr Beit and Mr Maguire had cognisance of Mr Rhodes's plans; but in view of the statement of the Duke of Abercorn, that "Mr Rhodes had received a large power of attorney, giving him the fullest power to do precisely what he liked without consultation with the Board, and the whole administration and everything connected practically with Rhodesia was carried on by Mr Rhodes, he simply notifying to the Board what had been done," the committee "considered that the Board as then constituted did not fulfil the objects for which it was created, or offer sufficient security against the misuse of powers delegated to the Chartered Company by the Crown,"—a statement which meant but little when carefully analysed. As for Mr Beit, he had played a prominent part in the affair, and had to share full responsibility for the consequences, but the committee completely exonerated the Colonial

Office from any foreknowledge of the affair. In conclusion, the committee desired to put on record their absolute and unqualified condemnation of the raid, and the plans which made it possible. Regarding the second part of the inquiry, relating to the administration of the British South Africa Company, the committee did not go into that, as it would have necessitated a prolonged inquiry, which would have prevented their presenting a report that session.

As for Mr Labouchere's report, the best thing about it was the recommendation that the officers concerned in the raid should have their commissions restored, as they had only acted under the orders of their superior officers. Mr Labouchere admitted that the Uitlanders had substantial grievances, but held that they had been much exaggerated, and that the real object of the raid was to enable wealthy men to become more wealthy. It is significant, when considering the value of this minority report, to recollect that not one tittle of evidence had been adduced at the sittings of the committee to support this very grave charge. In conclusion, Mr Labouchere gave it as his opinion that the raid formed one of the most disgraceful episodes in the history of this country, and that Mr Rhodes and Mr Beit merited severe punishment,—two remarks which the House of Commons assessed at their proper value.

In spite of an effort by the extreme Radicals to get Mr Hawksley brought to the bar of the House, which was vetoed by the Speaker, on the ground that the majority of the committee had made no

recommendation to that effect, it seemed as though the Government would take no action on the Report until, in response to agitation from the Opposition benches, Mr Balfour consented to set aside a night for the discussion of the whole question. So soon as this concession was announced the "Liberal Forwards" drew up a resolution on the subject, regretting the inconclusive report of the committee, and recommending that Mr Hawksley be ordered to attend at the bar of the House. When the debate came on, the Opposition front bench sided with the Government in the position they had taken up, and Mr Labouchere came in for a severe castigation at the hands of Sir William Harcourt, his nominal leader, for proposing what was virtually a vote of censure on a committee of which he had been a member.

In one of the most able speeches of the evening Mr Chamberlain vindicated his own position, and concluded with a eulogy on Mr Rhodes, in the course of which he declared that while his fault was almost as great as any that a politician could commit, yet he had done nothing which affected his character as a man of honour,—a self-evident fact which one or two of the lesser-known members received with manifestations of astonishment. When the division came to be taken it showed the utter rout of Messrs Labouchere, Blake, and those who had supported them; for while the Government forces, augmented by the leaders of the Opposition, amounted to 304, the "Liberal Forwards" could only muster the insignificant number of 77.

With this debate the history of a most deplorable affair may be said to have come to an end, though its effects still linger in South Africa, and are responsible for a considerable amount of the trouble that has since arisen there.

CHAPTER X.

OUTBREAK OF THE MATABELE REBELLION.

IN the early part of 1896 rumours of discontent and incipient rebellion among the natives in Matabeleland became somewhat frequent, but the authorities at Salisbury and Bulawayo laughed these to scorn, and urged that such a thing as a general insurrection among the natives was impossible. The Government, too, already had its hands full in coping with the terrible scourge of rinderpest, which was playing havoc among the cattle of the country, and had but little attention to give to the alarmist statements of settlers as to natives having been seen sharpening assegais and overhauling rifles,—a considerable quantity of which, it was known, had not been delivered up in conformity with the order for the disarmament of the natives at the conclusion of the war of 1893. As for the rinderpest, Mr Coryndon, on his return from a shooting expedition in the northern portion of Central Africa, reported that the disease, which had been prevalent among the herds of game there for some years, was moving southwards, and had, in fact, already crossed the Zambesi river.

This was looked upon as serious, though the general opinion was that there was no call for alarm, as while it was possible that it might decimate the wild game and such herds of cattle as were to be found in the low-lying and marshy parts of the country, yet it would not, in all probability, gain any footing among the cattle on the high plateaus. In this anticipation, however, which was shared in by both Government and settlers, they were wrong, unfortunately, for, to the general consternation, the disease soon made itself manifest among the cattle at Bulawayo, and in the middle of March 1896 it had reached to Salisbury, where it raged fiercely on the commonage around the town. The cattle seized with it died almost immediately, just as though they had been poisoned; and it has been estimated that fully 90 per cent of the cattle attacked succumbed to the disease. This was about the worst blow that the young colony had yet received, for not only did the cattle represent the principal source of food-supply, but it was practically the only means of transport that the settlers possessed. In addition to this, the epidemic was one of the indirect causes of the rising in Matabeleland which has now to be considered.

It has become a proverb almost in certain circles in England that the Matabele rebellion of 1896, with all the horrors that attended it, was brought about through the withdrawal of the white police force to accompany Dr Jameson to the Transvaal, which thus left Rhodesia at the mercy of the natives. This is by no means correct. Instead of

supplying the cause, the Jameson raid merely offered the opportunity. The causes of the rebellion were many, but the chief one, and the one to which all the others were subservient, was the dislike of the Matabele—who had been the lords of the land for so long—for their present position under the whites, and for the restraints which the spread of civilisation put upon them. When peace was arranged after the war of 1893, it should be remembered that while the Matabele had been defeated in two engagements, neither of which was decisive, the nation was by no means crushed, and there were thousands of natives who had never fought against the white men, and who were not at all content to credit the stories which those who had been pitted against the English told of their bravery and fighting powers. The death of Lobengula, coming as it did on the heels of the defeats at Bembesi and on the Shangani, made the Matabele glad to accept the British terms of peace. For a time they appeared contented—but only until the halter commenced to chafe their necks.

First of all came the cattle question, and this proved a sore point with the natives. As has already been said in these pages, the chief wealth of a Kafir was his cattle; and a blanket, a gun, or even a wife, was always estimated as being worth so many head of cattle. When the first war was at an end, following the procedure recognised in civilised warfare the Chartered Company demanded an indemnity, a step for which they have been severely condemned in certain quarters by persons who contended that the possession of the country was a

sufficient indemnity: this indemnity was taken by the Company in the form of cattle. Seeing that Lobengula only allowed his followers to own cattle on sufferance as it were, all the herds in the country might be said to be the property of the late king, and that was the view which the British South Africa Company took. The number of cattle in the country at this time was estimated at not less than a quarter of a million head, and the indunas were ordered at once to drive in the cattle from the districts over which they had control to Bulawayo. Some of the indunas duly complied with this demand, in which they saw nothing more than what was to be expected as the outcome of the war; but others, and these were chiefly they who had not taken any part in the fighting, declined to do so, and hid the cattle away out of reach of the Native Commissioners.

As the cattle did not come in in such numbers as they ought to have done, the Government ordered the Native Commissioners to collect and send in each month a certain number of cattle ranging from 100 to 500 head, according to the size of the district and the estimated number of cattle in it. This step proved a highly unpopular one among the natives, who would have been much more content to have yielded up the whole of their cattle at once. They did not understand this piecemeal method of taking the cattle, and thought that it was done through fear of them and of what would happen if the Government took them all at once; and they easily brought themselves to believe that they were much wronged,—

not a very difficult task,—and that the white men were taking their cattle from them so as to make them no better than slaves. The Native Commissioners noted this attitude on the part of the natives and reported it to the Government, at the same time adding their own condemnation of the scheme.

These unfavourable reports led the Government to reconsider its position, and an indaba of the leading indunas of the nation was summoned to discuss the question. At this indaba it was decided that the Government should take 45 per cent of the cattle in the country, while the remaining 55 per cent should be left for the use of the native population, and should be branded with the mark “N.C.” (native cattle), and the disagreement on this head thereupon appeared to have become a thing of the past.

The native excitement over the cattle question would have most likely subsided in a very short time after the above settlement had been arrived at had it not been for the fact that with the outbreak of the rinderpest, which occurred very shortly after the indaba, it was considered necessary to exterminate any herds in which the disease had made its appearance, so as to prevent the contagion spreading and reaching those cattle which up till then had escaped the pest. This shooting of seemingly healthy cattle, though an absolutely necessary step, was an act that was beyond the comprehension of the Matabele, who saw in it only a wanton intention to ruin them by taking away the only thing that made them wealthy;

and this was one of the chief contributory causes of the rebellion.

As will be seen later, however, there were many other contributory causes. One of them was the formation of a native police corps in Matabeleland, which was organised about the end of May 1895, was composed of about 300 men drawn from the Matabele nation, and was formed partly with the idea of propitiating the natives and partly with an idea of economy. The duties of this corps, which was, of course, officered by Europeans, was principally to assist the Native Commissioners to trace hidden cattle, and to keep an eye on the natives generally, and it was thought that the idea of letting the natives be controlled by men of their own nation would be welcomed by the Matabele. As a matter of fact, this step only served to accentuate the dislike felt by the bulk of the nation for the rule of the Chartered Company. The police soon began to assume domineering airs over their countrymen, and to bully and harry them as a Kafir will, once he has the power to do so placed in his hands; and this was the cause of grave discontent in the kraals, as was afterwards explained by the indunas to Mr Rhodes when he visited them in the Matopopo Hills on his mission of peace.

Then came the influence of the witch-doctors, always a potent factor when dealing with savage and superstitious nations. These witch-doctors found that since the advent of the white men their occupation was, like that of Othello, gone, for the practice of "smelling-out" and suchlike

were ruthlessly forbidden, and this the doctors noted with dismay. So soon as they saw that they were to be no longer allowed to weave their spells, they commenced to practise all their arts to work on the feelings of the nation to induce them to expel the white men from the country. The exceptional drought and the scourge of locusts which swept over the country about the time of the occupation they did not hesitate to ascribe to the white men, who had "bewitched" the country; and by the same reasoning the doctors traced the rinderpest to the same source. They artfully pointed out how few in number the settlers were, expatiated on the former prowess of the Matabele nation, and on the treasures of blankets, guns, and other articles that would be theirs once they had either exterminated the white men or driven them from the country, and were able to take possession of their belongings. In these efforts to stir up the nation to rebel, the witch-doctors were energetically seconded by the various members of Lobengula's family, who sighed for their former pride of place in the land; and then the mysterious "M'Limo" or god who dwelt in a cave in the Matoppo Hills, commenced to speak and to incite the natives to rise. All this encouragement fell on willing ears as the natives thought of the wrongs that they had suffered by the shooting of their cattle, and of the way in which they had been plundered and beaten by the native police, and of the shame to which that force had put numbers of their women; so that the seed once scattered fell on fruitful ground.

There remains to mention the most important reason of all, which has already been hinted at,—the hatred of the rule of the white men. The Matabele, used as they were to a life of plunder and fighting, found the restraint now placed upon them intolerable, and they disliked heartily being compelled to work for the settlers on the farms and in the mines; and this, coupled with the proud and unbroken spirit of the nation, led to the resolve to rise and turn the white men from the country so soon as an opportunity occurred. While the rule of the Chartered Company, despite the assertions to the contrary by many people who were ignorant even of the rudiments of the questions they professed to discuss, erred if anything on the side of leniency, which to the Matabele meant weakness and fear, the conduct of certain individual settlers served to greatly accentuate the ill-feeling which the natives felt towards the whites. These settlers, who were, after all, one is glad to recollect, only a very small minority, seemed to look upon their Kafir labourers as so many dogs, to be beaten and cuffed at will, while they overlooked or disregarded the fact that the Matabele were as jealous for the chastity of their women as any white nation could have been.

The opportunity for the rising, which had long before been determined upon, was found when the white police were withdrawn from the country, and the assertions that the natives were contemplating a rising increased in number each day; but still the Government declined to believe the statements until when at length the Matabele did cast off the mask

and rise in open insurrection, the authorities were almost totally unprepared to cope with them, though to the credit of the Government it should be said that they at once took all the steps possible to remedy this failure, and to stamp out the rebellion.

The first act of the rising was an attack on a police camp of eight natives on the banks of the Umsingwani river on the night of March 20, 1896, by a party of Matabele under the command of an induna named Umbozo. This attack took place about twenty-five miles from Bulawayo, and resulted in the murder of one of the police. The remainder of the party at once made their way to the Native Commissioner of the district and reported to him what had happened, and no sooner had this report been made than the announcement of the murder of another native policeman, on the same night, and by members of the same tribe, was received. This news was at at once sent forward to Bulawayo, but at that time it was thought that the rising was merely local.

On the 23rd March news reached Bulawayo that a white prospector named Maddocks had been murdered in the Insiza district to the south-east of Bulawayo, together with the information that the natives in that quarter were in open rebellion, and that the white inhabitants had been compelled to form a laager for their protection. In addition to this, other statements as to the outbreak of the natives in various parts of the country reached Bulawayo, and it was realised that the rebellion was of a general and widespread character, and

that the situation was rapidly becoming a very grave one. The Administrator at Bulawayo, Earl Grey, was away on leave at the time of the outbreak of the rebellion. In his absence, the Acting-Administrator, Mr A. H. F. Duncan, an ex-member of the British navy, at once formed a council of defence to cope with the emergency, which council was composed of himself, General Digby Willoughby, Captain Nicholson, and Captain Garden. So soon as this body was formed its first act was to despatch a patrol, made up of the remaining members of the Matabeleland Mounted Police, to the Insiza district, to rescue the settlers there and to bring them into Bulawayo; and this party was under the command of Inspector Southey, while the Hon. Maurice Gifford accompanied it.

On the evening of March 23 another patrol of sixty men, drawn from the Rhodesia Horse Volunteers, under Colonel Napier, set off towards the Shangani to succour any settlers in that part who might be in danger. News of the outbreak of the rebellion now poured into Bulawayo from all quarters. From the Umsingwani district the insurrection rapidly spread through the Filabusi and Insiza districts, while from beyond the Malungwani Mountains news arrived of the murder of some white men, including the assistant native commissioner, Mr Bently; and tales of massacres of the settlers in the outlying districts were so numerous and arrived so frequently that by March 30 it was estimated that there was not a white settler left alive in any of the unfrequented dis-

tricts of Matabeleland. During this time, from March 23 to March 30, numerous patrols left Bulawayo for the outlying districts to rescue the settlers, and as these arrived in Bulawayo the town began to be extremely crowded.

On March 24 patrols were despatched to the Filabusi district and to "Essexvale," Mr F. C. Selous' farm, which had already been attacked, while Captain Dawson took a party of scouts to reconnoitre the country in the direction of the Umsingwani. At noon of the 25th Mr Duncan summoned a public meeting in the court-house at Bulawayo, and in view of the gravity of the situation called upon every able-bodied man in the town to prepare at once for active service, to which they were liable under the terms on which settlers were admitted to the country. It was now fully seen that a general rising of the natives had taken place, and that severe fighting would be necessary before they were subdued. The Hon. Maurice Gifford seems to have been one of the first to recognise the determination of the blacks to regain their independence, for in a letter written to Colonel Napier after the fight at Cumming's store—which will be described later—he said, "This, in my opinion, will prove a more serious business than the old war." As terrible tales of the murder of helpless women and children began to arrive at Bulawayo, it made the settlers there eager to set off for the native strongholds, and come face to face with the fiends that could perpetrate such atrocities, and to give them what

Mr Rhodes described as an "everlasting lesson." The Dutch residents in the town at once offered to form a corps of their own for the defence of the country of their adoption. This force was afterwards known as the Afrikaner Corps, and rendered the most valuable services throughout the campaign under the command of Captain A. H. van Rensburg. Almost as soon as the rebellion took place it was seen that the native police were not to be trusted in this crisis, for numbers of them deserted to the rebels, taking with them their rifles and bandoliers; so it was decided to disarm the force as a precautionary measure. When this step came to be taken it was found that more than 200 of them had gone over to the rebels.

On the night of March 25 the dwellers in Bulawayo had a severe fright, and one that brought home to them in a forcible manner the peril in which they were situated. Owing to the carelessness of some one or other a rifle was allowed to go off on the outskirts of the town, and this at once led to a panic among the population, whose brains had already been excited with the tales that they had heard of the Matabele massacres. In the utmost alarm they rushed along the streets of the town crying that the Matabele were attacking the town, and hurrying the women and children into the buildings of the Bulawayo Club for safety. To add to the confusion, the bugles of the police were sounding the "alarm," followed by the "double"; and to those who were acquainted with the calls, this seemed to indicate clearly that they were in imminent danger of being attacked.

The women and children once placed in a post of safety, the men rushed madly towards the Government store to try to obtain rifles, while those who possessed weapons of their own hurried excitedly hither and thither without any idea as to what they were going to do, but filled with the intention to die fighting, and to put a bullet into the first black man that they caught sight of, independent of his being a friendly or a rebel; and it would have gone hard with any natives, no matter what their tribe, who had come within the range of the rifles of these distracted individuals.

Around the Government store the clamour and riot were indescribable, and rifles and ammunition could not be doled out fast enough by the officials. In fact, to slightly alter Macaulay's well-known line,—

“Such night in Bulawayo ne'er had been, nor e'er again shall be.”

When at length all the rifles in the store had been given out, comparative order was restored, and the excitement began to cool down somewhat. There were at this time many incidents that would have been irresistibly comic had it not been for the tragedy that was underlying them all. Men who had never grasped a rifle in their lives before found themselves armed with the latest pattern Lee-Metford and a supply of cartridges, at which they gazed in helpless astonishment. Such trained officers as there were in the town at once took those with arms under their control, divided them into parties, and then marched them off to guard those parts of the town

at which an attack from the Matabele might be expected. At length the dawn arrived without an assault on the town having been made, and one and all gave a sigh of thankfulness. Had a rush on the town been made by the rebels that night, when the confusion and the clamour were at their height, the consequences would have been too awful to contemplate, and would have vied with anything that the blood-stained pages of the Indian Mutiny can show.

On the following morning the authorities realised that precautions must be taken against any such alarm in the future, and that they must be prepared to resist an attack should one be made; so they decided to construct a laager in the market square large enough to hold all the inhabitants, where a stand could be made against any number of rebels. So soon as this was determined upon all the empty waggons in the town were requisitioned and drawn up around the square, and at each corner was posted either a quick-firing gun or a 7-pounder. The artillery in the town consisted of twelve guns, including a Gardner, a Gatling, a Nordenfeldt, the balance being made up of Maxims and 7-pounders; but out of these dozen guns fully one-half were un-serviceable. The rifles in the town numbered under 600, principally of the Lee-Metford pattern, with a few Martini-Henrys, and about a million and a half rounds of ammunition—none too much for the work that lay in front of them.

Outside the laager entanglements of barbed wire were laid down at a distance of about forty feet or so from the line of waggons, and as the days went

on the laager was added to and strengthened until it was considered to be impregnable to any force that the rebels could bring against it. The women and children were now transferred to the Market Hall, the entrance to which was in the laager, within which every night all the men of the town who were not away on patrol or on picket duty slept. The first night that this laager was occupied saw another unfortunate accident such as had created the panic on the previous evening,—a dynamite charge being exploded in one of the wells on the market square by some of the officers going the rounds. It had been announced that the signal for the outposts to fall back on the laager in case of an attack would be three rifle-shots, and at the sound of the explosion it was at once thought that the enemy were on the town. As a whole, the men kept their heads much better than they had done the night before: for one thing, they were this time behind fortifications, always an important point with untrained levies, and armed with rifles and cartridges, so that they took up their positions to await the onslaught with a fair amount of confidence.

There were some, however, who disgraced their manhood by making a mad rush for the Market Hall, which was already crowded to excess by the women and children, and the rapid entrance of these miserable cowards served to accentuate the terror which was reigning there. The officer on guard at the door was brushed aside by this frightened band, but he quickly reasserted himself, and, drawing his revolver, sent the craven-hearts back to the laager,

announcing meanwhile his determination to shoot the first man that should attempt anything like that again.

The terror prevailing among the women at this time was pitiable in the extreme, for they had no means of ascertaining what had really happened, and they crouched together in fear and trembling, listening for the sound of the first volley that should tell them that the attack had commenced. During this time several premature births took place under the most deplorable conditions; and altogether it was a scene such as those who were not actually present can only form a dim conception of. Outside the hall the cause of the explosion was quickly explained, and things soon quieted down.

A day or two after this the Rhodesia Horse was disbanded, and a new force, comprising every man in the town capable of handling a rifle, was organised in its place under the title of the Bulawayo Field Force. This body was divided into fourteen troops, the whole being under the command of Colonel Spreckley, with the Hon. Maurice Gifford, who assumed the rank of lieutenant-colonel, as second in command. The force included an artillery troop; an engineering troop; Grey's scouts, a fine body of men; the Afrikaner corps, over 200 strong; Dawson's scouts, another splendid body; and a corps of natives, mostly of the Amaxosa tribe, under Mr Johann Colenbrander. These natives mustered 150 strong, and were always to be found in the thick of the fight. The total strength of the force was about 800, but from this had to be subtracted the various

patrols that were always out, so that the number available for the defence of Bulawayo was nowhere near this total.

In addition to the main laager in the market square, an outpost was erected and fortified on the edge of the town on a large unfinished double-storey building known as William's Buildings, from the roof of which excellent views over the surrounding country were to be obtained. A post of observation was established here and carefully protected from attack, and was in direct telephonic communication with the staff office in the laager: this proved of the utmost service as the operations against the rebels proceeded. Outside Bulawayo three laagers were erected and garrisoned by the settlers—namely, at Gwelo, about 120 miles to the north of the capital; at Mangwe, sixty miles or so off on the main road to the south; and at Belingwe, about the same distance away on the east. The road between Bulawayo and Mangwe, leading as it did to the Cape Colony, was that along which reinforcements and supplies would have to come, and therefore an important line of communication. It was determined to keep it open at all costs; so a series of small forts was built along it, and the whole distance was systematically patrolled. For some reason or another, while the natives effectually prevented communication along the other roads leading out of Bulawayo in the early days of the rebellion, they left this, the most important of all, open. Their conduct in this respect was inexplicable, and showed exceedingly bad generalship. The prevailing idea was that the Matabele

had been ordered to leave this road open by the M'Limo, so that the settlers might take the hint and depart south by it; but it seems more probable that it was done as a sort of trap to get the whites to set off by it in a body, and then to ambush them at some selected point, thus exterminating them at one blow.

The work done by the various patrols that were sent out in the early days of the struggle is of so important and interesting a character that it demands a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MATABELE REBELLION—*continued.*

THE first patrol to come into contact with the rebels was that under the Hon. Maurice Gifford and Captain Southey, which left Bulawayo on March 24 for the Insiza district, to relieve a party of about thirty settlers who had collected in a store kept by a man named Cumming, who had sent to Bulawayo for assistance. As the patrol rode forward towards this store, they came across the first tangible evidence of the rising that the inhabitants had yet seen. About twenty-five miles from Bulawayo they found a waggon standing abandoned by the wayside, with the sixteen donkeys that had harnessed it lying in front of it stabbed to death with assegais. The load of the waggon had not been disturbed, but the men to which it belonged were nowhere to be seen. The patrol had not the time to make a long search for them, but it was afterwards found that they were lying murdered in the bush some little distance from the waggon. As the patrol rode forward, they were informed by such settlers as they met of the terrible murders that had taken place in that district,

and these tales made the men's blood boil with rage, imparting a bitterness and hatred of the Matabele into their fighting such as had been absent from the war of 1893, and leading to stern resolves to show no mercy to such of the rebels as should fall into their power.

Such a bloodthirsty and unforgiving spirit naturally raised a cry of horror among the fireside philanthropists at home, who denounced the white men in Rhodesia as cruel and barbarous monsters, slaying the gentle, undefenceless Matabele without mercy. But these slanderers of brave men had not seen the curls of tiny children and the grey locks of the aged bathed alike in their life-blood, with their features battered out of recognition, and with every atrocity that the diabolical minds of the “sweet and gentle” Matabele could devise; so that such outbursts and accusations of brutality against the settlers in Matabeleland only met with the contempt they deserved among all with the ability to distinguish between right and wrong.

To return to the patrol. Though the first part of the route traversed lay through a broken country with plenty of cover, the Matabele did not attack them as had been expected, but contented themselves with watching the force from a distance, and finally allowing it to get out into the open country without molestation. Cutting up solitary unarmed settlers was much more to the tastes of these rebels than attacking a party of well-armed men, even with the odds of twenty to one in their favour. The patrol reached Cumming's store on the night of March 27,

and immediately preparations were made for resisting an attack. Of the thirty men in the store when the patrol arrived, a large proportion were unarmed, so that the Hon. Maurice Gifford found that he had only about fifty rifles all told under his command. The Matabele attack was delayed for a few hours, but about five o'clock on the morning of March 28 a most determined rush was made on the store by a party of about 300 rebels, who in all probability looked for an easy victory. In this, however, they were much mistaken, thanks to the timely arrival of the patrol, by whom, keeping up a steady fire point-blank into their ranks, they were at length beaten off, but not before they had got very close to the store. So close did they get on one occasion, that one man was killed while endeavouring to climb up the window-sill.

When the Matabele retired it was seen that six dead were left behind, and it was ascertained later that their total loss was about twenty-five. On the side of the defenders six of the little force were wounded, one seriously; while Sergeant-Major O'Leary of the Matabeleland Mounted Police was killed, as was an American negro who was present. So soon as the natives were finally beaten off, the patrol prepared to return to Bulawayo with the settlers that they had relieved, while a message was sent forward to Mr Duncan asking for a small force to be sent out to meet them, together with waggons for the wounded, and if possible a doctor.

The next patrol to leave Bulawayo was a small

force of twenty-three men, which Mr Grey hastily collected to go to the rescue of six men and two women who were shut up in Stewart's store on the Tekwe river between Bulawayo and the Shangani. This force formed the nucleus of the body that was later to perform such gallant service under the name of "Grey's Scouts." The Tekwe store was reached on the afternoon of March 27, and it was found that the tiny garrison was on the point of being attacked. The rebels seemed to have got wind of the reinforcement having arrived, however, for no attack took place, and on the following day Colonel Napier's column, which had been patrolling the Insiza district, arrived at the store, and a return was made to Bulawayo. Between them the two patrols brought in no less than forty-three refugees to Bulawayo, all of whom, had it not been for the prompt action of the patrols, would have undoubtedly fallen victims to the Matabele.

On the night of March 29 another patrol left Bulawayo, commanded by Captain Pittendrigh of the Afrikander Corps, and composed of eleven men of that force. The object of the party was to go forward to the Bembesi district to relieve Mr Graham, the native commissioner at Inyati, who with six others was besieged there, and it was intended to make a call at Jenkins's store on the way to rescue another party there. This latter house was reached on the afternoon of Sunday, March 30, and ten men were found to be imprisoned here, hourly expecting an attack, for which they had made every preparation, even removing the thatched roof

so that the place might not be set on fire. As soon as the patrol arrived the settlers abandoned the store and went forward with the force towards Inyati, so that the party now numbered twenty-one strong,—not a very formidable force with which to confront a horde of Matabele. But the whole record of these patrols goes to show what can be done, even in the face of overpowering odds, by small bands of brave and determined men.

On their way across the Elibani Hills the party was fired upon by some stray Matabele, and a rush forward was made by the force to retaliate. As they did so they saw a large force of rebels approaching them in the favourite crescent formation nearly invariably adopted by the Zulu tribe, and it seemed as though nothing could prevent the little force being encircled and massacred where they stood. The whites at once fell back on a strip of brushwood, and using this to cover them, they maintained a hot fire on the enemy, who returned it. In a short time two of the little band were badly wounded, and it was decided to make a dash for the road, and to try and get away towards the Bembesi river. This was at once done, and the party went off as fast as their horses could carry them, closely followed by the natives. These were, however, soon left behind, and none appeared ahead of the party to dispute their passage, so that the Bembesi river was reached in safety.

A call was made at Campbell's store on the banks of the river, and here the sad news was learnt that the party at Inyati, eight miles farther on, which the

force had been sent to relieve, had all been murdered, with the exception of one miner, an Irishman named Madden, who told the story. In addition to this, it was learned that an impi of some 1200 or 1500 men was in the neighbourhood of Inyati, so that Captain Pittendrigh decided that with this body of rebels in front of him, and the 300 or so from which they had just escaped in their rear, who, he feared, were following them up, the position was getting somewhat serious. It was decided to fortify Campbell's store as effectively as possible, so that the overwhelming advantage of numbers which the rebels possessed might be to some extent neutralised. This fortification was carried out in a very systematic manner: the thatch on the verandah was cut down so as to lessen the risk of fire, openings were cut in the interior walls to allow of a free passage from one part of the store to another, and the outer walls were loopholed on every side. A case of dynamite which was on the premises was utilised to lay some mines round the store, to which a few hastily contrived short-time fuses were attached, while the remainder of the explosive was converted into hand-grenades; and seeing that they possessed about 2000 rounds of ammunition, they looked forward to the contest with a fair amount of confidence. Two of the party were sent off to Bulawayo to inform Mr Duncan and Colonel Spreckley of the peril the party was in, and to ask for assistance to be sent—a most dangerous errand.

On the early morning of March 31 the garrison at the store heard heavy firing in the distance, and

as this gradually drew nearer it was conjectured that the reinforcements were arriving. This proved to be correct; for in a short time thirty men, drawn from the Rhodesia Horse Volunteers and the Afrikaner Corps, galloped up to the store, under the command of Captain Macfarlane and Commandant van Rensburg. This relief force had been fired upon at a spot close to where the Queen's Mine is now situated, and a running fire with the rebels had been kept up for about half an hour. None of the party had been wounded by the rebel's fire, but two members of the advance-guard, Troopers Henderson and Celliers, were reported missing. These two men, it may be mentioned, arrived at Bulawayo almost exhausted on the morning of April 1, when it appeared that they had been fired upon by a party of rebels who had got between them and the main body, with the result that Celliers had his horse killed under him, and was himself severely wounded in the knee, so that he could scarcely stand. Henderson at once dismounted from his own horse and insisted on Celliers getting into the saddle while he walked beside it; and in this fashion the two men, one of whom was badly wounded, hid among the hills for three days with thousands of rebels almost within sight of them, until at length they managed to reach Bulawayo. Had they been attacked, there was nothing short of a miracle that could have saved their lives. If Henderson had been so minded, he could have in all probability escaped, for both he and his horse were unwounded; but he preferred to remain and risk death rather

than abandon his helpless companion. Such an instance of devotion was only one of many which occurred during the rebellion in Rhodesia, and yet it was such men that Mr Labouchere in his paper, 'Truth,' denounced as "buccaneers." Celliers was at once conveyed to the hospital at Bulawayo, but he unfortunately died of his wounds on May 16.

So soon as the newly arrived force had rested, the whole party prepared to return to Bulawayo, and the journey was performed without incident as far as the Shiloh Hills, where the natives began to appear in force. The rebels at once opened fire on the patrol, but, generally speaking, their aim was bad. On the other hand, the practice of the white men was excellent, and such of the natives as showed themselves paid the penalty of their temerity. The Matabele soon had their fill of fighting, and retired across the hills with considerable precipitation. During this skirmish the only casualty on the side of the patrol was one of the horses, which was shot in the abdomen. As the column approached the Kotki river a halt was called while a meal was prepared, the meat being provided by some native cattle that had been captured; and late that night Bulawayo was reached in safety, amid the cheers of the pickets who assembled to welcome the patrol.

Another patrol that did good service was that organised by Mr James Dawson for service in the Gwanda district. This force consisted of about twelve men, and left on March 25 for Mr Dawson's

store, which was situated in the Gwanda district, about seventy-five miles from Bulawayo, on the main road to Tuli. On the journey it was found that, to all appearance, everything was quiet along the road, and this revived in the minds of the patrol the idea that, after all, the rising was only of a local character, and was not general. By the time the force reached the Umsingwani river, however, evidences of the recent murder of settlers were plentiful, and its false hope was quickly dispelled. Though the force seemed to be close on the heels of the Matabele, the store was reached without any fighting having taken place, or indeed any parties of hostile natives having been sighted.

Almost all of the settlers in the outlying districts that had escaped massacre had been rescued by this time, and with the accession of strength which they made to Bulawayo, it was thought that offensive operations against the rebels might now commence. So with this end in view two forces of much superior strength to those that had been sent out before were organised and prepared to take the field.

The first of these forces was composed of fifty men of the C troop of the Bulawayo Field Force under Captain Brand, and as many of the Afrikaner Corps under Captain van Niekerk, together with a mule-waggon and a Maxim, and this left Bulawayo for the Gwanda district on April 1. The Umsingwani river was reached without the force having come into contact with the rebels, though while the men halted for the night some stray shots were fired at

the pickets, but a volley or two quickly sent them off out of range. As the force moved forward on the following day the buildings of the roadside were found to have been pillaged, and apparently the Matabele were only just in front. Early on the following morning Dawson's store was reached, and this was found to have been recently evacuated by the whites, though it had since been entered and plundered by the rebels. Some little uncertainty prevailed in the minds of the patrol as to the route taken by the settlers after quitting the store, and eventually it was decided to ride forward some four miles to where Mr Nicholson's camp was situated to see whether the party was there or not. On the camp being reached no trace of the settlers was to be seen, but an abandoned fort was found perched on the top of a kopje, and it was resolved to strengthen this, and to station the patrol in it until the settlers were traced.

Four of the troopers thereupon set off for Tuli to see if the party had gone on ahead, and to despatch a telegram to Bulawayo reporting the safe arrival of the column. On the following day two of these scouts returned with the intelligence that the white settlers were making for Tuli; and as information had been received by the patrol that they would in all probability be attacked on the return journey, two despatch-riders were again sent off to Tuli to forward a message to Bulawayo asking that reinforcements with a Hotchkiss gun might be sent forward to meet them. In reply Colonel Spreckley telegraphed that it was impossible to render any help,

and that the column was to return to the capital as quickly as possible. With regard to these telegrams being sent, it is worthy of note that the Matabele were terribly afraid of the telegraph wire, and hesitated to go near it, much more attempt to cut it; and to this fortunate fact is due the safety of many patrols who were able to telegraph to Bulawayo for assistance or further orders.

The column set off on its return on April 9, and all went well until the afternoon of the following day, when a party of rebels were seen seeking cover about 1000 yards from the head of the column. The Maxim was at once got into action, and as soon as the range was found made splendid practice, so that the natives were forced to retire after firing a few shots. The position cleared, the patrol once more moved forward, and after travelling for some little time came to a spot that was eminently suited for an ambush by the rebels. It was a narrow pass between two hills, with ample cover, and here it was thought that the Matabele would make a stand,—a conjecture that was quickly verified, for as the column approached the pass a heavy fire broke out on the left flank. This was at once returned by the whites, but the enemy were so well hidden that but little loss could have been inflicted on them. The Maxim was immediately brought into action, and commenced sweeping the bush from where the fire was coming. At this moment an unfortunate incident took place which greatly delayed the column, and led to more of the force being wounded than would have otherwise been the case. This was

the breaking of the *disselboom* or pole of the mule-waggon through a sudden outburst of firing just in front of the team's heads, causing them to swerve violently. While this accident was being repaired the natives kept up a warm fire on the force; and had it not been for the fact that there were many old and experienced campaigners among the detachment of the Afrikaner Corps present, the patrol might easily have suffered the same fate as Major Wilson and his men in the 1893 war. The force at length managed to get through the pass, though in a terribly disorganised condition, and as soon as the open country was reached the men spread out into skirmishing order, advancing towards the enemy, who were now fully 1000 strong.

The country in front of the column was an undulating one, comprising ridges of dwarf hills with little valleys in between, and there was an abundance of cover, of which the rebels took every advantage. The formation of the Matabele was the inevitable crescent, which is, as has been said, characteristic of Zulu warfare, and the horns of this crescent were slowly closing in with the intention of outflanking the white men, whose ranks were rapidly thinning under a well-directed fire from the centre of the rebel position. They stubbornly maintained their ground, however, and managed to keep moving forward, though very slowly, keeping up a hot rifle-fire meantime, while the Maxim did good service. The struggle raged on for about three hours, the whites going forward towards the centre

of the Matabele line, and the blacks doggedly contesting every inch of the way.

At length a small kopje was sighted, and for this the advance-guard of the column made a dash, with the object of gaining a slight rest and arranging a plan of campaign. So soon as they made for this kopje the Matabele divined their intention and rushed off to try to defeat it, and it was a race as to which should get there first. Ultimately the advance-guard managed to win and hold the kopje—which was nothing more nor less than a huge flat-topped rock standing about fifteen feet higher than the surrounding country—until the main body arrived.

The kopje was surrounded on all sides by dense bush, and in this the Matabele took shelter, getting up to within forty yards of the position, and it was only after four charges that they were beaten off. The fight had now lasted for six hours, and had been the hardest bit that had yet taken place. The loss on the white side was five men killed and about twenty-five wounded, two of whom were dying by the time the hill was reached, and thirty-three horses had been killed, while they had only been able to advance about five miles. It was estimated that some 250 of the rebels had been killed and wounded. The patrol was by no means out of danger when they saw the enemy retire, for they had sixteen miles or so of very bad country to traverse, and hampered as they were with their wounded, they would have been in an awkward position to repel an attack. Luckily the Matabele seemed to be tired of fighting

for a bit, and the patrol was permitted to go on its way without further opposition. On April 11 Bulawayo was reached, when the wounded (one man had died on the way) were transferred to the hospital. How the little force of 100 men escaped complete annihilation was a mystery. A considerable share of the credit must be given to Captain van Niekerk, who took command at the request of Captain Brand, and whose knowledge of Kafir warfare stood him in excellent stead; but all the men engaged fought with a bravery and a coolness which it would have been hard to surpass.

The second of these patrols was under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Gifford, and was known as the Shiloh patrol, leaving Bulawayo on April 4. This force likewise met with some severe fighting. The column was made up of the corps known as Gifford's Horse, with thirty men of the F troop of the Bulawayo Field Force under Captain Dawson, and eleven men of Grey's Scouts under Lieutenant Crewe—making a total in all of 118 men, with one Maxim; while it was accompanied by forty-nine Colonial Boys under the command of Captain Bisset. This force had a kind of roving commission, and was first to go to the Khami river to disperse an impi or two, then cross over to Inyati and do likewise, and finally to join the Salisbury road at the Bembesi river, thence returning to Bulawayo; but it was found impossible to carry this programme out. The force had not proceeded very far on its journey when news reached it of an impi being encamped about fourteen miles away on the Umguza

river, and thither Colonel Gifford determined to make his way. This was done, and soon an outburst of firing on the right of the column indicated that some of the scouts were being attacked, and the rear-guard quickly came into collision with a force of about 300 natives. Support was sent to the rear-guard, and after some heavy fighting for about an hour the rebels were beaten off. While this skirmish was going forward the main body had formed a laager on the open plain, and so soon as the fighting ceased the rear-guard fell back on this.

The column set off on its journey again early on the following morning, and had gone but a short distance when a body of about 500 rebels attacked the advance-guard under Captain Meikle. This contest raged across the Umguza river, but when the Maxim was brought into action and a searching fire opened on the rebel position, the Matabele soon beat a retreat. As they were doing this the Colonial Boys under Captain Bisset executed a smart flank movement and came upon the rebels unexpectedly, killing some thirty of them. After this no further attack was made on the column, which reached Fonseca's Farm in safety, though a strong force of Matabele was reported to be marching parallel with them.

On the following day, Easter Monday, April 6, the scouts under Lieutenant Rorke came across an indaba taking place, and as soon as the white men were seen a rush was made to cut them off. Lieutenant Rorke in particular had a narrow escape, his horse breaking loose from him and causing him

to have to make his way back to the camp on foot. It is likely that he would have been quickly killed had it not been for the timely arrival of the Colonial Boys, who covered his retreat. So soon as this firing was heard at the main camp, Captain Dawson's troop was ordered forward in support, while the B troop under Captain Flynn was sent off to take possession of some kopjes on the right of Colonel Gifford's position. The action now became general, and the rebels showed in very strong force, the brunt of the fighting being borne by the Colonial Boys and Dawson's and Flynn's troops on the right of the lines. After a time the column fell back upon a donga for shelter, and seeing that this position formed a natural laager, Colonel Gifford sent out orders for the whole force to fall back on it. This movement was carried out not a moment too soon, for some of the troops had great difficulty in fighting their way through the advancing horde of Matabele. The rebels followed this retreat up closely, and seemed to be about to attempt to rush the laager, but a steady fire checked them, and on the Maxim being turned upon them they fell back into the bush, about 600 yards away, from where they maintained a hot fire. Colonel Gifford took up his position near the Maxim, and here it was that he was wounded in the right shoulder. He made an effort to keep his place, but was at length overcome, and had to be taken to the rear, handing over the command to Captain Lumsden, who had accompanied the force as chief of the staff and second in command.

The fire of the rebels about this time was very accurate, and seemed to indicate that there were many ex-members of the native police force among them, and several of the troopers fell either killed or wounded. Shortly afterwards the rebels drew off, and the fighting for that day was at an end.

On the following day, however, the rebels returned to the attack, driving the Colonial Boys, who had been sent out scouting, back into the laager, which they charged with a desperate rush of the old Zulu type. They were received with a very heavy fire, however, which bowled several of their number over, so they changed their tactics, and opening out their ranks, attacked the laager on every side. Fighting had not been in progress long when Captain Lumsden was hit in the leg and rendered *hors de combat*, the command now falling to Captain Bisset. The fight raged sternly until midday, when the Matabele were at last beaten and compelled to retire. About two o'clock a messenger rode up to the laager with the news that the relief force, which had been sent for to Bulawayo on the previous day, was about five miles away, and was moving forward as rapidly as possible; and soon this force, which was under the command of Captain Macfarlane, arrived. The return journey was started on the following morning, and Bulawayo was reached by nightfall without incident.

The losses of the patrol amounted to two troopers killed in action, while six others were wounded, including Colonel Gifford, whose right arm it was

found necessary to amputate at the shoulder, and Captain Lumsden, who unfortunately died of his wound in Bulawayo hospital on April 10. The deceased officer was a retired captain in the 4th Scottish Rifles, and had arrived in Matabeleland on a shooting expedition only a few weeks previously.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MATABELE REBELLION—*continued.*

ABOUT the middle of April the Matabele impis began to draw in around Bulawayo, which was quickly becoming encircled by the rebels, who, as time went on and the defenders made no sign, grew very bold, and ventured under cover of night to steal several head of cattle from the outskirts of the town, and to murder the boys in charge of them. Several collisions between the white outposts and the Matabele occurred within sight of the town, but for some time nothing decisive took place. While this was going on at Bulawayo, Captain Laing managed to send news through from the Belingwe district to the effect that all the white inhabitants there had gone into laager and would be able to successfully resist any attack that might be made upon them. This was welcome news, for much anxiety had been felt in Bulawayo as to the fate of the settlers in the Belingwe district; but it appeared that Captain Laing had been warned of the rising, so soon as the first outbreak occurred, by the native commissioner in the Insiza district, and he had been thus enabled

to take precautions, though not a moment too soon, as it happened. A laager was immediately formed into which all the white settlers in the vicinity were ordered, and as this was being done a strong body of rebels made a sudden swoop on the farms and carried off a number of cattle. So soon as the news of this raid reached Captain Laing he set off, followed by nine men, to attack the natives, and succeeded in recapturing the cattle.

On April 16 the first real brush with the natives around Bulawayo, then estimated at about 10,000, occurred, a force of forty-five men under Captains Grey and Van Niekerk being attacked by an impi near the Umguza river, to the north-east of the town. The rebels opened fire at 800 yards, and the white force, all of whom were mounted, at once opened out into skirmishing order and made straight for the rebels' lines, which were across the river, at a canter. The stream was forded in two places, and on the farther bank being reached a party of rebels was seen about 200 yards off. The horsemen charged down on these, and after firing a wild volley at the whites, this party turned and fled into the bush. As the force rode forward it was seen that the natives who had been firing on them were but an advance-guard of a much stronger body, which now appeared in force, spreading out on either flank of the patrol with the intention of outflanking it and preventing it recrossing the river. Seeing that the odds were too great for them to cope with, the whites commenced to beat a retreat, and were closely followed up by the rebels, who became very courage-

ous as they saw the white men giving way before them. Slowly the white force fell back until the rebels gave up the attack and retired to their stronghold, while the patrol returned to Bulawayo, their casualties amounting to one man wounded.

The next event of importance around Bulawayo was the murder of an isolated scouting party of three members of the Afrikaner Corps who were massacred by a force of natives on April 19; while about the same time the farm of Colonel Napier, which was situated about three miles to the south of Bulawayo, was raided by a strong body of Matabele, who carried off a quantity of cattle in addition to murdering several friendly natives and besieging a party of white men. A force consisting of a troop of the Afrikaner Corps under Captain Pittendrigh, the K troop of the Bulawayo Field Force, and a detachment of Grey's Scouts, was immediately sent forward to the assistance of those on the farm, under the command of Captain Macfarlane, who also took a Maxim with him. As the homestead was approached Captain Macfarlane received the information that the whites and the friendly natives on the farm had succeeded in beating off the rebels, so the column struck off for the Umguza river, in the neighbourhood of which it was thought that the rebels would collect after their repulse. As the stream was approached scouts reported that a strong force of the Matabele was on the farther bank, and soon the rebels were sighted. They had evidently been informed of the presence of the patrol in their vicinity, for they were making

preparations for their favourite manœuvre of out-flanking the whites. Captain Macfarlane also received the intelligence that another impi was advancing against him from the direction of Government House, so he decided that his force was too weak to warrant his crossing the river. He therefore took up a position on a piece of open ground at the junction of a smaller stream with the Umguza, and there awaited the onslaught of the rebels. A skirmish took place in which the patrol lost one man killed and another wounded, while the rebels lost about twenty killed and wounded,—a loss that would have been much greater had it not been that the Maxim “jammed” just at the moment when its fire was becoming effective. As the natives showed signs of completely surrounding the force, and news was received of another impi being on its way to join in the attack, Captain Macfarlane decided to return at once to Bulawayo, and this was forth-with done.

So soon as the report of the skirmish was made to the authorities in Bulawayo, it was decided that an effort must be at once made to break up some of the impis, which were daily growing in boldness. On April 20, therefore, Colonel Napier collected a force of 230 whites with 100 of the Colonial Boys, together with a Hotchkiss, a 7-pounder, and a Maxim, this being the strongest force that could with safety be spared from the town, and an advance was made as far as the Umguza river. The Matabele, however, wanted to

draw the whites across the river; but Colonel Napier was not to be caught, so no fighting took place on that day, and the column returned to Bulawayo much disappointed. On April 22 another patrol left Bulawayo for the Umguza river, where the rebels seemed to have established their headquarters. This force was about 120 strong, and was composed of detachments of various corps under the command of Captain Bisset. Accompanying the force was the Hotchkiss and a Maxim and about 100 friendly natives. As this patrol advanced towards the Umguza it was quickly seen that on this occasion the natives intended to oppose the march, for firing on the patrol commenced as soon as the river was sighted. It was the left of the line under Captain van Niekerk that first came into action, but the fighting soon became general all along the line of the whites' advance, and a strong effort was made by the Colonial Boys, led by their officers and Mr F. C. Selous, to force the rebels back on to the river. While this was being done the Umguza was forded by the detachment of Grey's Scouts present, and these charged down on the Matabele stationed on the farther bank with telling effect, sending them off in full retreat completely demoralised.

There were many exciting incidents in this fight, chiefly when the recall was sounded and the Scouts fell back on the main position. Seeing the white men retiring, the Matabele plucked up fresh courage and charged forward, and it was about this time that Mr F. C. Selous had a very narrow escape.

This gentleman's pony, though broken in to fire, suddenly made off while its rider had dismounted, and left Mr Selous stranded some distance away from the patrol, who did not observe his plight, and with the Matabele rapidly bearing down upon him when they saw a single white man left to their mercy. Fortunately Lieutenant Windley noticed the position of affairs, and after making an unsuccessful attempt to catch the runaway steed, he rode up to Mr Selous's side and the two of them managed to get clear away from the Matabele, who maintained a dropping fire after them, luckily without effect. It was as narrow an escape as Mr Selous ever had, full of dangers as his life has been.

The most gallant deed of the many that were performed that day has yet to be told, and that was the bravery of Trooper Baxter of Grey's Scouts. These scouts had gone for some distance ahead of the main line and got among the Matabele, when the signal was given them to return. As they turned to execute this movement one of their number, Trooper Wise, was wounded as he mounted his horse, and fell to the ground. So soon as he let go the bridle his horse galloped away, leaving the wounded man to face certain death. Trooper Baxter, however, who saw what had happened, at once dismounted, placed Wise on his own horse, and proceeded to make his way back on foot. The Matabele thereupon turned their attention to Baxter, whose position seemed precarious in the extreme, until Captain Grey and Lieutenant Hook went to his rescue. As the two

officers galloped up to Baxter the rebels made a rush at them, wounding them both. The scouts, however, hung together in splendid fashion, and others turned back to help to beat off the rapidly increasing band of natives that was surrounding their companions. A trooper named Long rode up to Baxter, when the latter took hold of the mounted man's stirrup-leather, and the two then tried to dash off, but they had not gone far before Baxter was wounded and had to relinquish his hold. The Matabele were now nearly up to the horses, no further attempt to rescue Baxter was possible, and he had to be left where he had fallen, to die the death of a hero, giving up his life for the sake of another. This instance out of many similar can be commended to those people who seem to be of the opinion that an Englishman in South Africa, and especially in Rhodesia, is an incarnation of all the vices without a single redeeming virtue.

About a week after this fight—on April 24, to be precise—another determined move against the Matabele was decided upon, and the following force, being every man that could safely be spared from Bulawayo, was collected: 35 of Grey's Scouts under Captain Grey, 25 of B troop Bulawayo Field Force under Captain Fynn, 15 of Captain Dawson's troop, 35 of the Afrikander Corps under Commandant van Rensberg, 100 of Colenbrander's Native Boys under Captain Cardigan, and about 65 friendly natives under chief native Commissioner Taylor, with the Hotchkiss and a Maxim. The

guns were under the command of Captain Rixon, and the whole force, which numbered 120 whites and about 170 natives, was commanded by Captain Macfarlane, while several unattached officers accompanied the force, which left Bulawayo early on the morning of April 25 and marched towards the Umguzi river once more.

The plan this time was for the scouts to lead the natives on to attack the main body where the guns were, so as to give the quick-firing weapons an opportunity of inflicting a much-needed lesson on the rebels. So soon as the men riding in advance of the patrol were attacked, therefore, they fell back very slowly towards the guns, leading the natives on in pursuit. The Matabele were very wary, however, and though on occasions they got as close to the column as 200 yards, they resolutely kept to the bush, so that less punishment was inflicted on them than would have been the case had they showed themselves in the open country. The native fire was very hot for some time, but the aim was poor in the extreme: in fact, only two men on the white side were hit by this fire, though one of these was shot dead. Two determined rushes close up to where the Maxim was posted were made, but the steady fire from the machine-gun and the rifles drove the rebels back each time. The Matabele then changed their tactics, the main body retiring out of range, while a few picked shots stole forward under cover in the attempt to "snipe" as many of the column as possible. This movement would have doubtless caused much loss to the patrol had it not

been for the fact that, as it was being carried out, the Afrikander Corps made a dashing charge on the Matabele line, driving the rebels from position after position in fine style. The natives in their flight made straight for the ford across the Umguza river, but the Afrikander Corps were before them, and managed to deliver a crushing blow at the rebels as they attempted to cross the river, killing about seventy of them. The Hotchkiss, too, got the range of the retreating natives, and planted some shells right in their midst, doing considerable execution. While this was going forward on the left of the fighting line, the troopers on the right wing under Captain Dawson were having a warm time of it with the rebels in the bush in front of them, who were maintaining a galling fire. A party of 100 natives was detailed to clear the bush: this was speedily done, and the Matabele were soon in full flight all along the line, being hotly pursued by the whites for a distance of about two miles. A new impi then appeared to the west of the patrol, and made an attempt to cut off the Afrikander Corps; but the guns were quickly turned upon them, and they soon beat a retreat. Captain Macfarlane now decided that further pursuit was useless, and the return to Bulawayo commenced. The loss of the column on this occasion was four white men killed and as many wounded, while three natives also were wounded. The enemy's loss was considerable, probably about 150 out of the 2000 or so that were engaged. The result of this action was to cause the Matabele impis that had been

massing around Bulawayo to shift their quarters to a more remote spot.

Several other skirmishes, sufficient in themselves to fill a goodly sized volume, took place in different parts of Matabeleland about this time, in all of which the settlers—though numerically much inferior to the rebel forces opposed to them—managed to hold their own, and, in fact, to do a little more; but the final suppression of the rebellion still seemed a long way off.

About the beginning of May Colonel Napier received news that a small relief force from Salisbury was advancing towards Matabeleland, and it was at once decided to equip a large force to go towards the Shangani to meet this column, which was accompanied by Mr Rhodes. The force told off in Bulawayo for this duty was composed as follows: 44 men of Grey's Scouts under Captain Grey, 62 men of the Afrikaner Corps under Commandant van Rensburg, 43 men of Gifford's Horse under Captain Fynn, 21 men of the F troop Bulawayo Field Force under Lieutenant H. Lamb, a dismounted force of about 100 men under Captain F. C. Selous, and 38 men of the Artillery Corps under Captain Biscoe, with a 7-pounder, a 2·5 gun, a Nordenfeldt, a Maxim, and a Hotchkiss, while 250 natives also formed part of the force. Colonel Napier was in command of this formidable column, with Colonel Spreckley as second in command and Captain Molyneux as adjutant. The force numbered in all 655 officers and men. The column advanced some distance across the Umguza river before any-

thing of the rebels was seen beyond a few scouts, but as they approached the hill to the north-east of Bulawayo, known as Thabas Induna, a considerable body of Matabele was suddenly come upon by the dismounted scouts that had been sent forward under Mr Selous. A few shots from the Maxim, which was pushed forward, sufficed, however, to send these to the right-about, and they made for the thick bush which covered the country to the north of Thabas Induna.

On the following day the main body of the column remained in laager while a patrol of about 150 men under Colonel Napier went forward to reconnoitre the country. This patrol advanced in skirmishing order to Thabas Induna, which was reached without any of the natives having been seen, though their recently evacuated camps were discovered and burnt. The day was not destined to pass without a skirmish, however, for a party of about eighty scouts under Captain Grey suddenly came upon a body of some 300 natives, who were intrenched on a ridge about 400 yards away. The natives at once opened fire on the horsemen, who without hesitation charged directly at them. The sight of the horses bearing down upon them was too much for the nerves of the savages, who turned and fled. The scouts were quickly among them, however, and, their blood being fairly up, they were intent on slaying every Matabele they could find—for there were but few there who had not lost relatives or friends through the butcheries by the Matabele at the breaking out of the rebellion, and they would have been more than human had

they neglected to take advantage of this opportunity for revenge which was offered to them. No quarter, therefore, was given to the blacks as they were caught, but they were killed where they stood, and the deaths of the defenceless settlers were amply avenged on that afternoon by the infuriated scouts, who had at length got to close quarters with the rebels. It seems difficult in cold blood to justify this slaughter of the natives, but having regard to all the circumstances it can well be condoned.

On the next day the column resumed its march, and on May 19 the relief force from Salisbury was met. This relief column was organised to set out for Matabeleland so soon as the news of the outbreak of the rebellion reached Mashonaland. It was composed of 150 mounted men under the command of Mr Robert Beal, an old pioneer. The start of the corps was much delayed by want of transport, the oxen dying of the terrible rinderpest almost as fast as they were sent into the country; but it was at last able to set off, and, as already mentioned, Mr Rhodes, with Sir Charles Metcalfe, the consulting engineer of the Chartered Company, and other gentlemen, accompanied the force. It entered Matabeleland and proceeded on its way without incident until April 30, when the advance-guard was attacked by a body of rebels, about 800 strong, who were posted on the slopes of a hill. A gallant charge was made at this hill, which was eventually carried, and the rebels driven off. This skirmish over, the force managed to reach Gwelo without further fighting. At Gwelo they found

the inhabitants in laager, strengthened by the presence of a hunting party from the Sabakwe district, including Mr A. Weston Jarvis, a director of some of the leading Rhodesian mining and finance companies, Mr Egerton, M.P., and other gentlemen; and after leaving Gwelo until the time the force met Colonel Napier's column, the journey was entirely without incident of more than passing moment. Almost immediately the two forces met a conference was held, at which it was decided that a flying column under Colonel Spreckley should be sent into the Insiza district to break up any impis that might be there, while the main body under Colonel Napier should march through the valley of the Insiza river, the two forces ultimately joining hands again at the ford across the Insiza on the Bulawayo-Belingwe road.

Accordingly, on the morning of May 21 Colonel Spreckley set off with about 400 men for the south, while the main body left shortly afterwards as arranged. The flying column met with no fighting to speak of, but Colonel Napier's column had rather a hot skirmish in the Insiza valley on May 22. Early on this morning a force of about 100 men, under the command of Captains Grey and Van Niekerk, set off to find if possible the headquarters of the numerous bands of rebels that were known to be in the neighbourhood. As this scouting force rode forward a large party of Matabele appeared suddenly from the dry bed of a river, where they had been lying concealed, and a running fight commenced which ranged over four miles of ground.

The rebels made desperate efforts to cut off the scouts from the main body, but the horsemen prevented this, though they had two men killed and two others slightly wounded in doing so. Further skirmishing took place on May 23, but the rebels were soon dispersed and their kraals burnt. The column came upon several bodies of men, women, and children who had been brutally murdered by the blacks, and these were reverentially buried, while the men who witnessed these sad sights were more than ever incensed against the perpetrators of them. As the force marched through the district it also came across a number of cattle and large quantities of grain, which were taken possession of, so much of the latter as was not needed for the horses being destroyed. The two forces met at the appointed place on May 27, and three days later Bulawayo was reached.

Instead of proceeding to Bulawayo, the Salisbury column, strengthened by sixty men of the Bulawayo force under the command of Colonel Beal, turned southwards through the Filabusi district to meet an impi which was thought to be lurking there and to disperse it. In this they were disappointed, however, for, beyond a few stray natives who fled at the approach of the white men, nothing was seen of the rebels, and the column finally returned to Bulawayo towards the end of May without having come into contact with the Matabele.

Before Colonel Napier's force arrived in Bulawayo on May 27, reinforcements had arrived at that town under the command of Colonel Herbert Plumer of

the York and Lancaster Regiment. This officer was aide-de-camp to General Goodenough, who was then in command of the forces at the Cape, and had been appointed by the High Commissioner to raise a force of Irregular Horse for service in Matabeleland, now that it was becoming manifestly clear that the settlers were unable to put down the rebellion unaided. The force was quickly raised to its authorised number, 850, and this was divided into fourteen troops, forming five squadrons, each with quick-firing machine-guns; while a further force of 250 natives was organised to accompany Colonel Plumer's force by Captain Coope. On May 24 the first portion of this force reached Bulawayo, being about 370 strong, with two Maxims, and so soon as this arrived it was thought that with the force already raised a successful blow might now be struck at the rebels who had collected to the north-west of the town between the Khami and Umguza rivers. On the night of May 24, therefore, the force moved out towards the native position shortly before midnight in two columns, one of which was led by Colonel Plumer and the other by Major Watts. About eight miles from the town the advance-guard of the latter column came upon a force of natives who immediately opened fire on the whites. The men were taken at a disadvantage by this counter-attack, but they quickly dismounted and poured some effective volleys into the bush where the Matabele were hiding, thus checking any intention of charging which the natives might have had. The main body of the column hurried forward on hearing the firing, and with the Maxim

promptly got to work, the Matabele were fain to beat a retreat. At the sound of this action Colonel Plumer's column, which was marching parallel to Major Watts's force, turned aside to ascertain the cause and to render any assistance necessary; and when the rebels were driven off the forces combined and formed a square, in which formation they rested until daylight without further attack.

So soon as it was dawn a scouting party was sent out to search for traces of the Matabele in the vicinity, and to find out exactly where the native position was. A small force of these scouts under Captain Knapp came on a body of Matabele outposts in a strong position among the wooded ridges of the adjacent hills, and these the scouts at once attacked, driving them back on the main body of rebels, which was in the distance. About eight o'clock that morning the whole force under Colonel Plumer's command moved forward towards where the natives were, to give battle to them. The outposts of the Matabele having been driven in, the column was at once launched against the rebels' main position, and the blacks were driven from three successive ridges in fine style. This was followed up by a stern chase across the country for a distance of upwards of three miles.

This chase over, the column rested for some hours, and then in the afternoon it set off for a farm on the Khami river where the scouts reported that an impi had collected at a spot about sixteen miles from Bulawayo, occupying a very strong position. After a march across country for about two hours the scouts reported that the enemy were

assembling in force on their left, and the advance-guard at once attacked a strong body of Kafirs who were established on a thickly wooded hill, to reach which it was necessary for the attacking force to cross two gullies under a perfect hail of bullets. The whites went at it resolutely, however, and with the arrival of the main body the rebels were routed out of their position and pursued through the bush until nightfall put an end to the pursuit. The brunt of the fighting had fallen upon the advance-guard, who had done their work in excellent fashion, and who were complimented by Colonel Plumer. As the horses showed signs of fatigue, it was decided to return to Bulawayo without further delay; and this was done. The first patrol under Colonel Plumer was in every way a success, for the natives had had the severest defeat inflicted upon them that they had up till then experienced, and they had been forced to retire from the neighbourhood of Bulawayo.

When the column returned to Bulawayo it was found that the situation had altered somewhat, for the Imperial Government, now recognising that the rebellion was spreading, and that the settlers had no real prospects of being able to suppress the revolt, decided to take over the crushing of the Matabele into its own hands, and to employ imperial troops for that purpose. With this end in view Major-General Sir Frederick Carrington was sent up to Bulawayo to see for himself how the land lay, and to decide as to the number and character of the troops that would be needed before the re-

bellion was at an end. Sir Frederick Carrington was an officer who had seen considerable service in South Africa, having taken part in the expedition to Griqualand in 1875, and in most of the other South African wars since that time, and at the date of his appointment to take charge of the imperial forces in Rhodesia he was commander of the infantry at Gibraltar. Among the numerous staff which accompanied General Carrington to Rhodesia was Lieutenant-Colonel R. S. S. Baden-Powell of the 13th Hussars, an officer who had seen considerable service in Afghanistan, Bechuanaland, and at the Cape, and who had the reputation of being a very capable soldier,—a reputation which he considerably enhanced by his successful scouting in Matabeleland, for which work he has a marvellous gift, such as distinguished the early trappers and hunters in Canada. This gentleman was General Carrington's chief staff-officer, while Captain C. B. Vyvyan was appointed brigade-major, and Lieutenant V. Ferguson aide-de-camp.

With this arrival of imperial officers at Bulawayo the first period of the Matabele rebellion may be said to have come to an end.

CHAPTER XIII.

END OF THE MATABELE REBELLION.

GENERAL CARRINGTON arrived at Bulawayo on June 2, and on the same day the second portion of Colonel Plumer's Irregulars also arrived, so preparations for delivering a decisive blow at the Matabele were immediately commenced. General Carrington as a first step decided to send out three patrols to clear the country around Bulawayo of such rebels as still remained there. This done, the columns were to be combined and an advance made towards the Matoppo Hills, where three strong impis were established, and which it was seen would only be cleared after severe fighting. In accordance with this idea Colonel Plumer left on June 5 with a force 460 strong to go towards the north-west along the Khami river to its junction with the Gwaai river, to attack an impi stationed there, while about the same time a force of 400 men under Captain Macfarlane set off for the north to clear back the natives there.

So soon as these two forces had left the town, news was received by Sir Frederick Carrington that

a large impi had taken up a position on the Salisbury road near the Umgusa river, about six miles from Bulawayo, and about two and a-half miles from the camp of the Salisbury column under Colonel Beal, which was stationed outside Bulawayo. The news of the arrival of this strong rebel force so close to the town, now depleted of nearly 1000 of its garrison, was serious, and all the mounted men in Bulawayo were instantly mustered under the command of Colonel Spreckley to set off to attack this impi. The white force numbered about 200 men, with three guns, and was composed of Grey's Scouts under their gallant leader, a strong detachment of the Afrikander Corps under Captain van Niekerk, and about forty-five men of the Bulawayo Field Force under Captains Brand and Selous. As they approached the Umgusa Colonel Spreckley's force was joined by the Salisbury column, which had been attentively watching the movements of the rebels for some time. They reported that the natives had broken up their camp and were awaiting the attack of the whites in the open country, so it was decided to strike at once. The Afrikander Corps was detached from the main body and set off to ford the river at some distance higher up the country, while the main force followed the road. Once across, the Afrikanders were to attack the rebels on the flank, while the main attack took place on their centre.

The river forded, the main body turned towards the left and crossed some rising ground which concealed them from the Matabele. The heights once reached, the order was given to charge down on the

rebels, then about 100 yards or so away, and this order was immediately carried out, the Afrikanders now rejoining the main body and forming up on the left of the line, the right wing being occupied by the Salisbury Corps with the scouts in the centre. As this body thundered forward, the Kafirs, who were fully 1000 or 1200 strong, were seized with panic, and after an ill-directed volley they turned tail and fled into the bush. A hot chase followed, during which considerable execution was done on the rebels, and this was only relinquished as the natives reached the thick bush country around Thabas Indunas. The native loss on this occasion was very heavy—in fact, some of those present declared that it was the heaviest of any action yet fought—while the casualties on the side of the whites were four men wounded, two seriously.

The story, as told, of the daring of this impi in approaching so close to Bulawayo is an interesting one. It is said that the witch-doctors, whose powers had greatly increased, or rather revived, since the outbreak of the rebellion, had promised the soldiers that they would bewitch the white men and strike them blind, so that the Matabele might cut them up at their leisure and without fear of their being hurt themselves. Implicitly believing in this, the impi moved forward and awaited the onslaught of the whites with confidence. As the column charged forward, however, and numbers of the natives began to fall killed and wounded, and the white men showed no signs of becoming blind, the rebels lost their faith in the promises of the

doctors, and saw that they had been duped; so they turned and fled, as has already been stated. One cannot help feeling that this turning of the tables on the Matabele, who had marched towards Bulawayo in the firm belief that they would be able to murder the white men in safety, was nothing more than what they deserved.

As regards Colonel Plumer's patrol on the Gwaai river, it was unable to come up with the enemy, who melted away before the whites, and all that was done was to burn some of the rebel kraals and to destroy a large quantity of grain; after which a return was made to Bulawayo without any decisive engagement having been fought. No better fortune had attended Captain Macfarlane in his endeavour to attack the rebels, and this force likewise returned to Bulawayo without any fighting to report. The next patrol to set out was one under Colonel Spreckley for the Shiloh district and the country to the north-east of Bulawayo, and this left on June 7. This force was composed of over 500 whites and natives combined, but only about 120 of this number were mounted. The patrol at first marched along the banks of the Kokti river, and the old police-camp at Shiloh was reached on June 11 without any of the rebels having been seen. A fort was built on this site, and a garrison of about seventy whites with some twenty natives under the command of Native Commissioner Lanning was left in charge, while the patrol marched forward in the direction of the Queen's Mine. The Matabele, however, had retired towards the Bembesi river. A force of 100 men was detached from the

main column about this time, under the command of Lieutenant Banks-White, to set off to Inyati to assist in building a fort there; and this done, the force was to return to Shiloh.

This was carried out, and the whole force on June 17 moved forward up the banks of the Bembesi. Soon the scouts reported the presence of rebels in the vicinity of the column, and numbers of Matabele quickly collected on the hills which skirted the valley of the river and were watching the movements of the column. When the force halted for the night a conference of the leaders was held, at which it was decided to attack the hills on the following morning and to drive the rebels out of their positions—a difficult task; but, as it happened, there was no need to attempt it, for on the following morning the scouts reported that the rebels had decamped, and were falling back on a much stronger position at Thabas Imamba—a rocky hill some twenty miles to the eastward. With the small force at his command, Colonel Spreckley did not feel justified in making for this position; so the column returned to Bulawayo without having come to blows with the enemy.

Just as preparations for launching a strong force at Thabas Imamba were going forward, Bulawayo was startled to hear that a rebellion had broken out in Mashonaland, and that the natives there were murdering and plundering with all the ardour and the cruelty of the Matabele. This news to many was the last straw, and it was confidently stated that the prosperity of Rhodesia was a thing of the past. Instant steps were taken by the authorities to assist

the settlers in the eastern province of the colony to put the rising down. The Salisbury column under Colonel Beal at once returned to Mashonaland, and a force of sixty men, drawn from Grey's Scouts and Gifford's Horse, was also despatched to Salisbury. The causes for the rising in Mashonaland have never been fathomed, but probably the influence of the Matabele M'Limo had something to do with it, and, without doubt, it was to a considerable extent fermented by the Matabele indunas, who announced that they were driving the white men from the country, and that if the Mashonas rose and aided them to do this, henceforward they would be safe from raids by the Matabele, and they would be allowed to live in peace. The Mashonas still had lively recollections of the cruelty and relentlessness of the Matabele, and they saw that if they did not rise and help their neighbours to cast off the control of the white men, and the latter were driven from the country, the Matabele would turn upon them and exterminate them; and as the Mashonas feared the Matabele far more than they did the whites, they rose in sympathy. Then, again, the national characteristics of the Mashonas have to be taken into consideration. They were avaricious, cunning, great cowards, callous to a degree to the sufferings of others, and with respect for nothing but brute force. They had been treated for some years with great, almost excessive, leniency by the white men, so that their opinion of them was far lower than the one they held of the Matabele, who were always ready to enforce their commands with the point of the spear;

and when they saw the Salisbury Relief Force set off for Matabeleland, they considered that the remainder of the white settlers in the country were completely at their mercy, and therefore looked upon it as an unusually good opportunity for them to rise and massacre the white men and confiscate their property.

To return to the rebellion in Matabeleland, which as yet demands the chief attention. The next event of importance was the disbandment of the Bulawayo Field Force on July 4, it being considered that the work for which it was originally formed was at an end with the arrival of imperial troops; so the force was assembled at Bulawayo for a final inspection by Sir Frederick Carrington, after which the Administrator, Earl Grey, addressed them. He referred in warm terms to the way in which they had fought, at times in the face of great hardships, and commented in especially complimentary language on the way in which the Dutch settlers had rallied to the defence of the country of their adoption. A new military police force was at once raised so soon as the Field Force was disbanded, and many of those who had fought in the former force joined the new one.

Henceforward the whole of the operations against the rebels were under the direct control of Sir Frederick Carrington. Seeing that the patrols had managed to break up effectively the Matabele to the north of Bulawayo, and to disperse them until there was only one spot, at Inyati some fifty miles away, where they were in anything like force, General Carrington decided to send a body of 800 men to

attack this stronghold under the command of Colonel Plumer. The force was made up of 400 men of the Matabeleland Relief Force with four Maxims, a detachment of the Royal Artillery with two guns, a portion of No. 10 Mountain Battery from Natal, a detachment of Irregulars under Captain H. Brown with Colenbrander's natives, and the Cape Boys under Major Robertson. This force left Bulawayo by night, and marching under cover of darkness towards the rebel position, reached it at dawn on July 5, when preparations were at once made to carry the hills by assault. The detachment under Captain Howard Brown went to the front first, and going straight at the first kopje on which the natives were massed, carried it in splendid style. Beyond this kopje was another larger hill on which the main body of the enemy were posted, and this was stormed by the Cape Boys, who, led by Major Robertson, behaved gallantly, and were, man for man, much better soldiers than the Matabele rebels. The Matabele clung to their position with the utmost tenacity, but were at length forced to retire with considerable loss. As they retreated the guns were brought into action, and the shells from these weapons did excellent work in breaking the enemy up. When the fighting was over, the casualties among Colonel Plumer's men were found to amount to four whites killed and as many wounded, while of the Cape Boys and friendlies engaged six were killed and nine wounded. The rebels' loss was estimated at fully 200, while 600 women and children fell into the hands of the column, among the number being one of the queens

of the late Lobengula. About 1000 cattle, with a large number of sheep and goats, were also captured. By this action the power of the Matabele was completely broken to the north of Bulawayo, and the rebellion stamped out there.

After this defeat it was thought that the natives might be prepared to accept terms of peace, so the Imperial Government ordered General Carrington to issue a proclamation of clemency to the Matabele, offering pardon to all who surrendered and gave up their arms, unless they were proved to have been actively engaged in the murder of white settlers at the outbreak of the rebellion. The publishing of this proclamation was received very unfavourably in Bulawayo and throughout Rhodesia generally. The settlers held that it hinted that the white men were too weak to crush the rebellious Matabele, and that they were compelled to make the first overtures of peace. It was also held that it would be the means of encouraging the Mashonas to proceed with their rebellion, and to go on massacring and pillaging, as the whites were powerless to prevent them. While not justifying this extreme view, it certainly seemed to be an admission of impotence on the part of the Imperial Government; but it should be remembered that the war, coming as it did on the heels of the rinderpest, the raid, and other troubles, was proving a terrible drain on the finances of the already depleted treasury of the Chartered Company, and they, at least, would have welcomed with gladness the conclusion of the rebellion. The end was not yet, however, for the rebels declined to avail themselves

of the offer of clemency, despite the lessons that had been taught them.

While the north-western portion of Matabeleland had been cleared of the rebels, the difficult country round the Matoppo Hills was teeming with them, and it was recognised that whatever decisive engagements were fought would have to take place in that district ; so a vigorous campaign in the Matoppos was decided upon. On July 19 Sir Frederick Carrington assembled a force of about 1000 strong, which moved off at once for the hills. Sir Frederick Carrington accompanied this force in person, while Mr Rhodes and Earl Grey also were present. The advance party was under the command of Colonel Baden-Powell, and was composed of a mixed force of whites, friendly Matabele, and Cape Boys, with a Hotchkiss and two Maxims, while the main body was led by Colonel Plumer. As the hills were reached several small parties were detached and sent forward to clear the numerous caves and kopjes of such rebels as might be concealed there ; and in this work they were well supported by the guns, who shelled any parties of rebels who showed themselves. The impi opposing the force was under the command of Babyan, one of the two indunas who visited England in 1889 with Mr Maund, and before the whites retired they had completely broken it up.

While this action was going forward, Captain Tyrie Laing, who had been in command of the laager at Belingwe, was engaged in a sharp struggle with another impi about eight miles away. This white force was in laager on the morning of July 20, when

a strong force of rebels attacked him, charging right up to the laager, and inflicting considerable loss on the defenders. The machine-guns which the force had with them were immediately got into action, and after hard fighting for upwards of three hours, the Matabele were beaten and driven off northwards. The casualties to the whites in this action were three white men killed and ten wounded, and twenty-five friendly natives killed and eighteen wounded, or a total loss of killed and wounded of nearly sixty.

From this time up to the end of July several small patrols were sent out through the eastern portion of the Matoppos, and the rebels were hunted from position after position; but as the impis were collecting again in force, it was decided to strike another heavy blow at them. It was reported by the reconnoitring parties that five impis had gathered in the hills under the command of a chief named Umlugulu; so on August 5 a strong force under Colonel Plumer set off to attack them. The first step with which Colonel Plumer concerned himself was the capture of a ridge on which the rebels were posted, which would enable him to sweep the ground for some distance round with his artillery. Captain Beresford was therefore detailed to carry this ridge, and at once went forward with a small force. Heavy fighting at once commenced, Captain Beresford being attacked on three sides at once by bodies of the enemy. They rushed close up to his party, who managed to beat them back several times. So soon as Colonel Plumer learnt the tight corner Captain Beresford was in, he hastened his main body forward with all speed to his

assistance. Before he could reach Beresford, however, the little force had succeeded in forcing the rebels from the ridge, and the guns were almost immediately brought forward, when they commenced to shell the enemy at a distance of 1000 yards. While this was going on, the column under Colonel Plumer had opened out into skirmishing order and gone forward to the next ridge on which the enemy had halted, and at this they charged, covered by a hot fire from the guns. Fighting was now proceeding all along the line, but the whites maintained the upper hand, and the rebels were driven from one position after another. They fought very stubbornly, however, in the real old Zulu fashion, and at one time caused the whites to temporarily give way until the arrival of the guns, which, by the accuracy of their aim and the quickness with which they were handled, completed the discomfiture of the Matabele, who were at length sent off in full flight to hide in detached parties in the surrounding hills, the smallness of the white force preventing any pursuit. This was by far the most important engagement yet fought, and it had been entirely successful. The column had lost five men killed and fifteen wounded, some of the latter ultimately succumbing to their wounds, while of the 5000 natives engaged fully 500 must have been killed and wounded.

For the next few days after this action only scouting work was entered upon, when it was ascertained that the impi under Umlugulu had not taken part in the fighting, and that if he was to be attacked another action would be necessary. Accordingly on August the 8th another advance against the rebels

was decided upon, and a force was despatched for that purpose; but beyond a few desultory skirmishes no fighting took place, as the Matabele declined to show themselves in the open.

While this fighting was taking place in and around the Matoppos, Major Ridley, with a force made up of a squadron of the 13th Hussars and detachments of other regular regiments, was patrolling the district around the Gwaai river and breaking up such bodies of rebels as he came across. At this time the situation in Matabeleland was rather a curious one. While the northern portion of the country was clear of rebels, and those in the Matoppos were, as will be shown later, prepared to treat for peace, in the east the rebellion was still in full swing; and while Major Ridley's force was round about Gwaai, a similar force, composed of a squadron of the 7th Hussars and a detachment of mounted infantry, was moving forward from Tati under the command of Colonel Paget. On August 26 Major Ridley prepared to strike a blow at the rebels, who had collected between the Shangani river and the Somabula forest. For this purpose he formed a force consisting of a squadron of the 13th Hussars under Captain Agnew, a company of the mounted infantry of the York and Lancaster regiment under Captain Kekewich, and a strong body of the Afrikaner Corps under Captain van Niekerk, —consisting in all of about 350 men, together with a 7-pounder and three Maxims. At the beginning of September this force moved forward to attack several kopjes on which the rebels had massed in force, and the first of these was taken after hard fighting for

over five hours, the white loss being five men killed and wounded. While no less than seven other kopjes remained to be taken, the troops under Major Ridley had gained a great moral victory, inasmuch as an induna named Uwini, who was supposed by the natives to have been endowed with invulnerability by the M'Limo, was wounded and taken prisoner.

About the time that this happened Colonel Baden-Powell arrived to take over the command of the force, and the first question that presented itself to him was, What was to be done with Uwini? The induna was known to have been one of the chief instigators of the rebellion,—indeed he admitted as much,—and to have been active in the murder of several whites in the opening days of the rebellion; and as he declined stubbornly to forbid his people to proceed further with their resistance to the whites, it was decided to try him by court-martial. This court-martial was held on September 13, and as he practically confessed to all the charges brought against him, he was condemned to be shot. This sentence was carried out on the evening of the same day at a place where the whole of his people, who were still holding out on the neighbouring kopjes, could see all that transpired. The wisdom of this drastic step was quickly seen, for on the following day over 1000 of Uwini's people came in with their arms in their hands and surrendered, and yet it led to some friction between the High Commissioner of the Cape and General Carrington. The High Commissioner, so soon as he was informed of the affair,

ordered the arrest of Colonel Baden-Powell until an inquiry was held, and this order General Carrington flatly refused to carry out, thus giving Colonel Baden-Powell his full support in the action he had taken, which was, after all, a most necessary one. At the conclusion of the rebellion a court of inquiry was held to go into the matter, and in the end Colonel Baden-Powell was completely exonerated from all blame for the course that he took.

Colonel Baden-Powell having defeated the natives around the Gwaai, now resolved on commencing operations in the Somabula forest, and for this purpose he formed a patrol of 160 men from Major Ridley's force. This patrol was divided into three parties under the command respectively of Colonel Baden-Powell, Major Ridley, and Captain Kekewich, and was to enter the forest at three different points so as to come up with an impi under the command of an induna named M'Tini, which it was supposed was being driven towards them by Colonel Paget's force. This patrol had a difficult task before it, for the route lay through very thick bush, and day after day passed in keen search for a foe who never came. At length the party under Captain Kekewich managed to join hands with Colonel Paget at the Gwelo river, and the latter stated that he had made a dash for a rebel position some forty miles down the river, and this he had surprised, cutting up the impi. So soon as Colonel Baden-Powell heard of this he at once returned to the main body of his command and sent out orders for the parties under Major Ridley and Captain Kekewich to meet him on the Hartley Hill

road, his object then being to advance against an impi which was rumoured to be at Inyati. This destination was reached on October 1, when it was found that the impi, hearing of the advance of the white force against it, had broken up and dispersed over the country. Colonel Baden-Powell was not quite sure of his next step after this, but he received an order from Sir Frederick Carrington to join forces with Colonel Paget in advancing against a chief named Wedza.

So soon as he had received this order Colonel Baden-Powell struck off from Inyati towards the Belingwe district, where Wedza's impi was stationed, with a force of 160 men, the Afrikander Corps having been withdrawn from his command to return to Bulawayo to be disbanded. On arriving within about fifteen miles of Wedza's mountain, where the stronghold of that induna was, Colonel Baden-Powell found no signs of Colonel Paget's force being anywhere in the neighbourhood; and on October 14 receiving information that the other force was unable to get through, he decided to attack the mountain, which was in reality nothing more than a huge kopje, with his own force. He so skilfully manœuvred as to make it appear to the rebels that there was a very strong force of whites present. As he approached the hill the guns were at once taken forward and the leading position shelled, and the men charged right up to the natives, Colonel Baden-Powell leading them in many cases.

In one of these skirmishes the colonel with a small force was almost surrounded by the enemy, and

things looked very serious for the little band for a short time until Prince Alexander of Teck, who was acting as staff officer to Colonel Baden-Powell, opportunely arrived with a strong force of Hussars, and drove the rebels back. Skirmishes of this character went on for three days, the enemy being driven from one position after another, but still fighting with the utmost pertinacity, until at length they were forced to flee across the country, and the whole district was in the hands of the whites by the night of October 17. On the following day a party of volunteers under Major Ridley went forward, and with a quantity of dynamite which was found in Wedza's camp, and which had been stolen from the whites in the early days of the rising, blew up the granite kopje which had formed the key of Wedza's position.

With the downfall of Wedza and the shooting of the M'Limo in a cave in the Matoppos by the American scout, Burnham, the Matabeleland rebellion may be said to have come to an end. The rainy season was fast approaching, and it was seen that the force under General Carrington's command was much too small to ultimately crush the natives into submission: it looked therefore as though the forces would have to go into winter quarters at Bulawayo until the rainy season was over, when more troops could be sent up and the campaign started afresh.

This step, which was the only possible one from a military point of view, would practically have been the ruin of the British South Africa Company, which would have been called upon to pay the enormous

bill that would have resulted ; and it was when this idea was first mooted that Mr Rhodes conceived the bold idea of going unarmed and without escort into the rebel stronghold in the Matoppos and endeavouring to fix up terms of peace with them. This gallant feat, with its successful issue, will be described fully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER THE WAR.

To have crushed the Matabele rebellion by force of arms would have meant a cost of close on £5,000,000 for the British South Africa Company, and this would have been nothing more nor less than ruin for them. Yet there did not seem to be any way out of the difficulty, until Mr Rhodes resolved on trying what his personal influence with the natives would do. He gained Sir Frederick Carrington's permission to set off on his dangerous errand to the Matoppos,—a scheme that seemed preposterous and foolhardy to a degree to most of those in Bulawayo. Plucky and fearless the action undoubtedly was; but Mr Rhodes is far too brave a man to be foolhardy, and, as it turned out, he had gauged correctly the feelings of the natives, and what his influence with them was. He chose as his companions Dr Hans Sauer, Mr J. Colenbrander, who acted as interpreter, Captain Stent (the correspondent of the 'Cape Times,' to whom we are indebted for the knowledge of what really occurred), and two friendly natives, John Grootboom, and Makunga. The three white men accompanying

Mr Rhodes all carried revolvers but Mr Rhodes himself carried nothing more than a riding-switch,—a mannerism that is strongly reminiscent of his early friend, General Gordon, with whom Mr Rhodes has much in common.

As they rode forward to the Matoppos they had to pass through a country that was covered with boulders and thick bush that would have given the rebels excellent cover, but none appeared to dispute the way, and the camp was pitched on the lower slopes of the hills. Mr Rhodes had not remained there many days before he was informed by John Grootboom, a Kafir of the Xosa tribe, that an indaba of the leading indunas had been summoned to take place in one of the fastnesses of the hills, where they would be safe from the white soldiers, and that they would like to see their old friend Johann (Mr Colenbrander), but they did not dare to hope that Mr Rhodes would visit them. If he would do so, however, he would be welcome, and would not be molested in any way. This was the opportunity for which Mr Rhodes had been seeking, and he seized on it at once and moved forward with his followers to the place indicated.

The spot selected by the rebels was a small amphitheatre at the foot of sheer granite walls, which towered up some 200 feet in height, and this amphitheatre was further dominated by a large granite kopje. As the white men approached, both the hills around and the kopje were covered with natives, who watched the arrival of the little party with interest. It was a trying moment for the nerves of Mr Rhodes and his companions, for even supposing the indunas

to keep their word, what guarantee had they that the chiefs would be able to restrain the *majaha* (young warriors), whose tempers had been excited by the rebellion, and prevent them from swarming down on the whites and massacring them without further delay? The least sign of weakness or nervousness on the part of any one of the party would have probably signed the death-warrant of them all. Fortunately they did not flinch, but dismounted unconcernedly from their horses and awaited the issue. They were not kept long waiting, for soon a white flag was hoisted on the kopje and a long string of indunas approached the place where the four white men were standing, forming a semicircle round them, and squatting on the ground. Among the indunas present were all the chief men of the tribe, including Sikombo, Babyan, Umlugulu, considered by many best qualified to know to have been the chief instigator of the rebellion, and Dhliso.

Mr Rhodes greeted them according to the native formula, and then told Mr Colenbrander to ask them what they wished. Mr Colenbrander therefore called upon the indunas to tell their troubles to "Rhodes, their father, who had come among them with peace in his heart." Receiving this invitation, the indunas poured out their wrongs, or imagined wrongs, with great volubility. That they had real grievances, though, there can be no doubt, and the chief of these—as has already been explained—was the conduct of the native police. Mr Rhodes quickly pacified them on this head by assuring them that no more native police should be employed in Rhodesia; and the

indunas thereupon turned to the cattle question, and said that Dr Jameson had promised that only Lobengula's cattle should be taken, and that every man should be allowed to keep his own, and yet this had not been done. It was an exceedingly difficult task for the Native Commissioners to determine which of the cattle had been the personal property of the late king and which had not, though in a sense the whole of the cattle in the kingdom had belonged to him, so that there was justification for their acting as they had done. In reply to this, Mr Rhodes pointed out that since the advent of the rinderpest almost all the cattle in the country had been killed off, so that the natives and the Government were alike in being without cattle.

The indunas then discussed other minor topics, but Mr Rhodes's natural impatience of temper led him to stop this and take the offensive; so he told Mr Colenbrander to say to them that he was not angry with them for fighting against the white men, "but why," he asked sternly, "did you kill our women and children? For that you deserve no mercy!" Even Mr Colenbrander, brave and fearless as he had proved himself, was astounded by the audacity of this demand on the part of Mr Rhodes, and he pointed out to his leader the risk he was running in putting such a pertinent question to the natives with so many thousands of their soldiers in the vicinity only waiting for a sign to swoop down on the white men. Mr Rhodes insisted on the question being put, however, so Mr Colenbrander obeyed, and the indunas bowed their heads and were dumb. Mr Rhodes then went on to

say, through Mr Colenbrander, that what was past was past, but what of the future? Were they prepared to go on and continue to fight against the white men, whose numbers could be increased almost to infinity, or would they have peace? This was the critical moment, and the fate of the British South Africa Company hung in the balance. To the intense relief of Mr Rhodes and his companions, who fully understood the importance of the question to all interested commercially or financially in Rhodesia, one of the leading indunas seized a stick and held it above his head. This done, he threw it down at the feet of Mr Rhodes, crying, "See! this is my gun; I cast it at your feet." He then repeated the action and said, "And this is my assegai, and I do likewise." As he did this the remainder of the indunas sent up a cry of assent, and Mr Rhodes and his companions knew that the policy of bearding the natives in their stronghold had been crowned with success, that the people who had invested their money in the country were saved, and that the Chartered Company had turned a very ugly corner.

So soon as this was done Mr Rhodes pointed out to the indunas what the situation in the country really was: how the cattle were nearly all dead; how their grain had been destroyed, and unless more was speedily sown there would be famine in the land. He urged them all, therefore, to return to their own country and prepare to avert this calamity, while he would remain at Bulawayo, where they could come to him and consult him and lay their grievances before him should any arise. The induna

Somnavulu then spoke and assured Mr Rhodes that he need not fear, the war was over, and they would keep their word not to fight again; whereupon the white men mounted their horses and prepared to return to their camp, well satisfied that peace would henceforward reign in the land that had been for so long ravaged by war. Mr Rhodes's own comment on the proceeding as he rode away is worth recording. "It was," he remarked, "one of the scenes in life that make it worth living." He remained for some time longer in his camp in the Matoppos surrounded by thousands of armed natives, who never, however, showed the slightest disposition to harm him. Truly, if there is, as the poet asserts,

"A sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack,"

there is another who watches over the fate of Mr Rhodes.

The rebellion thus closed had been a very severe one, as the death-roll showed. The number of persons murdered during the insurrection was 148, while there were fifty-eight others who were known to have been in the country at the time of the outbreak, and of whom nothing further was heard, and therefore the whole of these must be presumed to have been killed by the natives. In addition, thirty-four officers, non-commissioned officers, and men were killed in action and 100 wounded, so that the total "butcher's bill," to use a latter-day colloquialism, amounted to 240 white people killed and another 100 maimed, some permanently; and to this has yet

to be added the returns from Mashonaland, where the revolt was at this time in full swing.

The rebellion in Mashonaland was only very slight when compared with the rising in Matabeleland, but its outbreak was characterised with even more brutal atrocities than those perpetrated by the Matabele. As an instance of the methods adopted for killing unprotected white settlers by these "gentle, innocent, and guileless" natives, as some persons at home are wont to regard them, the death of a settler named Behr may be cited. He was seized by an overpowering number of Mashonas, who, after a desperate resistance on his part, managed to pin him to the ground, where he was firmly held while one of the fiends took an axe and actually hacked his chest open. After such horrors as this it can hardly be wondered that the whites lost command of themselves at times, and went to more extreme lengths with the natives than they otherwise would have done.

The first act of the Mashonaland rising took place about the middle of June 1896, and it quickly spread throughout the country, until something like 20,000 natives were disaffected. Opposed to this horde were about 2000 settlers all told. With the experience they had gained in the Matabele rebellion, however, the authorities took a firm grasp of the situation, and instantly commenced preparations for putting it down. General Carrington could not then spare more men from Matabeleland than those of Gifford's Horse, which he had sent forward with the Salisbury Relief Force under Colonel Beal, and

the Imperial Government determined to send out regular troops to suppress the insurrection. A force of mounted infantry was therefore despatched by sea to Beira, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Alderson. At Beira they were met by a party of Royal Engineers and some other detachments, and this force at once advanced to Salisbury. As things began to settle down in Matabeleland, General Carrington found that he was able to send up more help to Mashonaland; and therefore, on July 3, 100 men of the Matabeleland Field Force, under the command of Major Watts, started for a post known as Marendella's, on the road between Salisbury and Umtali, while a short time later three other small detachments also left Bulawayo for Mashonaland.

The inhabitants of Salisbury at once formed a laager round the jail on the outbreak of the rising, into which 700 people retired, while events succeeded each other in very similar fashion to those which had marked the opening of the Matabele revolt. At Enkeldoorn another laager was formed by the Boers, who were the inhabitants of this agricultural portion of the country. This laager had to stand several attacks from the rebels, who fought in very determined fashion; but they were on each occasion met with that stubborn resistance for which the Boers are famous, and were beaten back every time. Things went on like this for some months, several desultory skirmishes taking place, at which the natives sometimes showed great courage, and at others beat hurried retreats almost as soon as the whites attacked them.

As the rainy season approached and peace was arranged in Matabeleland, the forces, or a considerable portion of them, were moved up into Mashonaland; and on November 10 Sir Frederick Carrington was able to start for Salisbury with his staff and accompanied by a column under Colonel Paget, while Mr Rhodes and Earl Grey had already gone forward. This column passed Enkeldoorn without meeting the rebels, but when that town had been left about twenty-five miles behind, a skirmish took place with the native forces near a hill known as Thabas Isamba, in which the rebels met with a severe repulse, losing some fifty of their number. General Carrington arrived at Salisbury by means of forced marches on November 19, and found that the hospital was filled with men who had been wounded in the skirmishes which had taken place.

Enough space has already been taken up by the rebellion in Rhodesia, but a brief *résumé* of the various patrols that swept Mashonaland may be given here. Major Watts had confined his attention at first to the south-eastern portion of the country, attacking the forces of an induna named Makoni, who was at length captured by the whites and his impi dispersed. Fearing that the rebels would make an effort to rescue him,—in fact, Major Watts had definite information that it was their intention to do so,—a court-martial was held on Makoni, and he was condemned to be shot, a sentence that was carried out without loss of time. Acting on the same lines as he had done with Colonel Baden-Powell, the High Commissioner ordered the arrest of Major Watts so soon

as he heard of the execution of Makoni, but at the subsequent inquiry that officer was completely exonerated and acquitted.

While Major Watts had been conducting these operations in the south-east, Major Jenner had been attacking a chief named Umtigeza, who had his stronghold to the south of Salisbury. Major Jenner's force was composed of 180 whites, and after some severe fighting, in which the force had three men killed and as many wounded, Umtigeza was captured and his refuge destroyed. In addition to these two columns, a detachment of the Mashonaland Field Force, 160 strong, under Major Tennant, attacked an induna named Limbansotas, who was routed and his kraals destroyed. Captain Sir Horace MacMahon, with a force of 200 men, had marched northwards from Salisbury through the Mazoe district, where they found large bodies of rebels taking refuge in caves. These caves were at once attacked and the rebels driven out of them, while three of the largest were destroyed.

The strongest column sent out about this time was that under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Alderson, which numbered about 500 men, and patrolled the country in the Lo Magondi district to the west of Salisbury. This column attacked three impis and dispersed them all, blowing up their strongholds with dynamite, and inflicting severe loss on them. The whole history of the Mashonaland rebellion is, in fact, that of a series of detached patrols being sent out to break up various impis and to scour the different parts of the country. There were

no set battles such as characterised the Matabeleland rising, but in their place there were harassing skirmishes by the score, in which the natives hid behind rocks and in caves, and had to be literally driven out into the open by main force. These patrols visited every part of Mashonaland, but almost as quickly as an impi was broken up in one direction the remnants collected in another part of the country and formed a fresh force, so that the whole programme had to be gone through again.

General Carrington was recalled so soon as it was deemed that there was no further need for his presence. The final pacification of Mashonaland was left in the hands of Sir Richard Martin, who, so soon as the dry season of 1897 set in, at once prepared to take the field with a force of 1400 men, made up of a detachment of the 13th Hussars under the command of Major Ridley, the British South Africa Company's new force of mounted police, several corps of volunteers, and a number of friendly natives, when an energetic campaign was at once entered upon. The principal efforts of the whites were directed against the forces of the leading indunas of the country, Mashingombi and Kunzi. Some very determined fighting took place, which lasted intermittently until October 1897, when the tenacity and perseverance of the whites, and their policy of forcing a fight whenever the rebels showed themselves in anything like strength, led to the natives relinquishing the contest. This they did all the more readily, seeing that their warlike neighbours, the Matabele, had given up the struggle and

left the white settlers in possession of the country. Very soon large numbers of rebels surrendered to Sir Richard Martin, so that by the close of the year all organised opposition to the rule of the Chartered Company was at an end, and only isolated parties held out, with which the police were sufficient to cope. And so the rebellion in Rhodesia was finally stamped out, after having lasted for about twenty months.

During the rising in Mashonaland 98 persons are known to have been murdered by the natives, almost all of them in the most horrible fashion; while 35 men were killed in action and 39 wounded. The total number of men killed and wounded fighting in Rhodesia during the outbreak was 69 and 139 respectively,—a large total in the face of the comparatively small number of whites engaged.

With the rebellion over, there was a sorry sight to meet the eyes of the settlers in Rhodesia. The cattle were almost all dead, so that the principal means of transport was cut off; the crops were not yet sown, while the stock of grain in the country was almost nil; and such mines as had got well forward with their development were almost all wrecked. The head-gearing on these mines in many cases was broken down, either by the whites to barricade their dwellings against the assaults of the natives, or by the rebels from sheer maliciousness; and the shafts, for want of attention, had caved in, and in places had become flooded for want of pumping. The whole country was, in short, a

wreck, and the authorities hardly knew where to commence to set matters straight. To crown all, Dr Jameson and his officers, who knew the country best, were all in England serving their sentences for the raid, and Mr Rhodes was summoned to London to attend the sitting of the parliamentary committee; while it seemed very possible at that time that the British South Africa Company would be deprived of its charter. On the whole, the outlook for Rhodesia was gloomy in the extreme, and it was no wonder that the voice of the pessimist was to be heard on every side.

The bulk of the men, however, who had embarked their fortunes in Rhodesia were not of a type to allow themselves to be overcome by difficulties, however severe, and they set about putting their house in order in a very determined and systematic manner. While there were those in Bulawayo and Salisbury who loudly declared that Rhodesia was a ruined country, and that all efforts to make it otherwise were foredoomed to failure, there were others, and these were in the great majority, who yet believed that the country had a great future before it. That there were gold-reefs of a payable character in the country they had proved for themselves; and the presence of other minerals, such as coal, silver, copper, lead, blende, tin, antimony, quicksilver, and arsenic, was known; but it was generally recognised that before the wealth of the country could be exploited the cost of transport must be greatly lessened. This fact had already impressed itself on the mind of Mr Rhodes, and

he determined on at once extending the Cape Railway system northwards to Bulawayo, thus forming the first link of the now famous "Cape to Cairo" scheme, which probably even then was shaping itself in his brain. So soon as this step was decided upon, which was before the rebellion, but owing to that cause had been much interrupted, the money was immediately forthcoming, Mr Rhodes providing a large proportion of it from his private purse, and the construction was pushed forward with all speed.

Pending the arrival of the railway at Bulawayo, which Mr Rhodes, in a speech made at a banquet to Colonel Napier in Bulawayo at the conclusion of the rebellion, said would be before the end of 1897, the land and mining companies in Rhodesia set about energetically to repair the ravages caused by the rising, as also did individual settlers. While the mining companies naturally delayed sending up heavy machinery for hauling or crushing the ore, they commenced to systematically open up and prove their properties, and this time was therefore well employed in sifting the good claims from the poor ones.

When the rumours of gold in Rhodesia first commenced to circulate three or four years before this time, the wealth of the goldfields, as has been the case on the Klondike, in West Australia, and in fact on every goldfield yet discovered, was much exaggerated, and there were many people who entered Rhodesia in the firm belief that once they had staked out ten claims anywhere, they might look upon their fortunes as made, and a mansion

in Park Lane as only a matter of a short time. This was, of course, absurd, and there was bound to be a severe reaction as a result, which is precisely what has happened. Men totally inexperienced in quartz-mining, in many cases, pegged out claims, and set to work to sink shafts and bring to the surface the fortunes that they firmly believed were lying there, ready to be hauled up as rapidly as they could be shovelled into the buckets.

While rich claims undoubtedly do exist in the country—and even the most rabid opponents of Rhodesia will hardly now deny that some rich reefs are actually there,—wherever there are 60,000 claims taken up, as there were in the country at the end of 1896, there are bound to be hundreds, perhaps thousands, of claims staked off that either contain no gold or else possess it in such small quantities as not to pay for the extraction. When the disappointed miners found that their claims were of but little value, they quitted the colony, declaring that its mineral wealth was much exaggerated, and that, save in very few instances, the gold would not pay for the digging. Then the pendulum commenced to swing against the country. There were many individuals and companies, however, who saw that while some of the claims they held were valueless or nearly so, yet there were others that would pay, and pay well, and work on these selected properties was pushed forward with all speed.

So soon as the rinderpest had been stamped out, too, the farming population, who were mostly of Dutch

descent, began seriously to turn their attention to the agricultural possibilities of the country. While it seems probable at the present time that Rhodesia will never become a great wheat-growing country, like Manitoba or Southern Russia, yet there is without doubt a great future before it as a grazing and stock-raising colony, especially now that the rinderpest shows no signs of returning. The high lands around Umtali and to the east of Salisbury offer pasturage for countless herds of cattle, sheep, and horses, which last, away from the haunts of the tsetse-fly, should thrive exceedingly, and it seems but a question of time before Rhodesia rivals New Zealand and the other Australian colonies in stock-raising.

It is to this farming and stock-raising that we must look for the real future prosperity of the country. The mining community form the bulk of the population at the present moment, but the miners as a class are what one may term a floating population merely: they enter the country with the idea of making, if not a fortune, at anyrate a competency, after which they will return to London, to New York, or to Berlin, according to their nationality, to spend the remainder of their days. They do not for a single instant contemplate the possibility of settling permanently in Rhodesia, and it is therefore to the commercial and agricultural classes that the country must look for its future population, for it is these who will form the backbone of the country, and on whom the future place of Rhodesia in the history of the empire depends. For the next few years it will be for its

mines that Rhodesia will be most talked of, but in the future it will be its commerce and its agriculture that will maintain the position which its mineral wealth has won for the country, and that mineral wealth will then be but an incident.

As to the trade and commerce of the country, at the end of the rising it was, naturally, at a complete standstill. The commonest necessities of life were scarce and commanded famine prices. As an illustration of the prices which were gained in Bulawayo during the time of the laager in the early days of the rebellion, the following may be quoted as having been actually obtained : Eggs, 74s. a dozen ; potatoes, £30 per bag ; cauliflowers, 32s. 6d. each ; bottle of milk, 30s. ; fowls, £1 each ; and turnips and carrots at the rate of 5s. a pound.

After the war the trade of the towns—such as Bulawayo, Salisbury, Gwelo, Umtali, and Victoria—immediately began to increase rapidly as the population settled down to their everyday employment, and the sudden improvement of trade led to a great mistake being made, the consequences of which were felt throughout the country, but principally at Bulawayo and Salisbury. As trade increased, traders also increased, but in greater proportion, and on the strength of a few months' good trade buildings of an ornate and expensive character began to spring up in Bulawayo, until, architecturally speaking, that town is to-day the equal of almost any town in South Africa, and is, indeed, much superior to many with double its trade and revenue : in fact, Bulawayo has been dubbed the "City of Palaces." While this desire of the

inhabitants to form a first-class town which should be in every way a credit to the new colony was highly commendable, yet one cannot help thinking that they allowed their zeal to outrun their discretion; for when the reaction came, as it was bound to do, the great bulk of the traders had no reserve funds on which they could fall back and await the passing away of the quiet time. It was then found that the preparations for trading greatly exceeded all the demands which the colonists could possibly make for several years to come; and for some eighteen months, therefore, trade and commerce in Rhodesia in general, and in Matabeleland in particular, were almost completely stagnant, and several of the weaker traders went to the wall.

CHAPTER XV.

SIR RICHARD MARTIN'S INQUIRY.

HAVING regard to the fact that the Select Committee of the House of Commons was ordered to make an inquiry into the administration of Rhodesia, the Government towards the end of 1896 instructed Sir Richard Martin, the Deputy Commissioner for South Africa, to inquire into the native administration of the British South Africa Company, and the probable cause or causes of the recent rebellion. The points on which he was specially to report were: (1) The labour question; (2) the cattle question; (3) the alleged concession of a monopoly to Mr Homan, in direct conflict with article 20 of the charter; and (4) the cause of the rebellion. So soon as he received these orders, Sir Richard Martin immediately set about his task, despite the fact that the rising in Matabeleland was only just over and that in Mashonaland was in full swing; and on January 16, 1897, he sent his report to the High Commissioner, Lord Rosmead (Sir Hercules Robinson). This report treated each of the four heads given above separately, and Sir Richard Martin opened his remarks by saying

that the evidence he had been able to obtain had by no means been sufficient to enable him to make as satisfactory and exhaustive a report as he would have wished. Private individuals, he continued, had been most reluctant to give information, and those who had done so, with but one or two exceptions, had made it conditional that their evidence should be accepted as confidential,—for obvious reasons not wishing their names to be made public. These facts, Sir Richard Martin added, prevented him from supporting his own views in several cases with the names of men whose opinions, owing to their unquestioned knowledge and experience of the natives of Matabeleland and Mashonaland, must needs carry much weight.

Without for an instant wishing to impugn the *bond fides* of a most painstaking member of the public service such as Sir Richard Martin has proved himself to be, one must confess feeling dubious about the authority of these men “whose opinions, owing to their unquestioned knowledge and experience of the natives of Matabeleland and Mashonaland, must needs carry much weight.” Who were they? and why were they reluctant to come forward and publicly give their evidence? Men of weight and authority do not usually make accusations in private that they fear to support in public. The relations between the British South Africa Company and the settlers had up to the time of the outbreak of the rebellion been of a most cordial character, with one or two very slight exceptions, and there seem to be no grounds whatever for the insinuation made by Sir Richard

Martin that men in the country feared to come forward and state their grievances against the Company. The testimony of such men who fear to have their evidence investigated, and if possible refuted, is unworthy of consideration, and Sir Richard Martin should have refused to accept it. The government of Rhodesia was not perfect—the perfect government has yet to be discovered—and no one would for an instant hesitate to say that the Chartered Company had made mistakes; but the mistakes were such as come through inexperience and are inevitable in the opening up to civilisation of a new and extensive territory with a large native population.

To come to details, the first part of Sir Richard's report dealt with the labour question. In September of 1896, the Deputy Commissioner, as the first step in his inquiry, addressed a series of questions to each of the magistrates and Native Commissioners in Matabeleland and Mashonaland, the leading one of which was as follows: "Did there exist in your district previous to the outbreak any practice exacting compulsory labour from natives either for public works, such as roads, &c., or for private persons or companies in mines or elsewhere?" This was followed by others as to signs of disaffection prior to the rising, and the claiming of the cattle by the Company.

This circular was answered by five magistrates and fifteen Native Commissioners; and the first paragraph in Sir Richard Martin's report states that of the fifteen Native Commissioners who sent in replies, eight admit in unhesitating language that compulsory labour did exist, while two only, those at Matoko's

and Lesapi, state directly that no practice exacting compulsory labour existed. Of the remainder, the Native Commissioner at Marandellas stated that he believed there did exist a practice exacting compulsory labour, but he was unable to speak with certainty; and the Native Commissioners for Melsetter, Umtali, and Bulawayo did not deal with the question directly. This, it may be pointed out *en passant*, only accounts for fourteen out of the fifteen said to have sent in replies. "Of the five resident magistrates who have sent in replies," the report continues, "three, those for Salisbury, Victoria, and Melsetter, state deliberately that no practice exacting compulsory labour existed. One, the magistrate at Gwelo, pleads inability to speak with certainty, owing to the matter having been left in the hands of the Native Commissioner; and one, the resident magistrate at Bulawayo, avoids the question." "I would point out," says Sir Richard Martin after these remarks, "that out of the eight Native Commissioners of Matabeleland who have sent in reports, only one, the Native Commissioner for Bulawayo, refrains from admitting that the practice of compulsory labour did exist."

These sentences in Sir Richard Martin's report form at first sight a very serious indictment of the British South Africa Company, amounting to nothing less than a charge of permitting, and even encouraging, slavery under the British flag, and these charges have now to be considered impartially in detail. To commence with, it must be premised that the term "compulsory labour" is a most elastic one, and one that it is hard to confine within

defined limits. It may mean slavery pure and simple, or it may mean the necessity which exists throughout the world of a man earning his daily bread. In the former case it would be a curse and a disgrace to any civilised nation, but in the latter it would be one of the greatest blessings of mankind. The men who are compelled by circumstance to work the hardest are those who make a nation what it is; and we have it on old authority that "the drones must die." The charge against the Chartered Company of forcing the natives to work seems to be one that should be placed to their credit, for the person that is idle is the one that is vicious.

But this charge in the report of Sir Richard Martin goes further than this,—it plainly hints that natives were seized in their kraals, taken by force, and compelled to work at the bidding of the whites. This, it is claimed, is supported by eight Native Commissioners in Matabeleland. It would be out of place here to give the replies of the Native Commissioners to Sir Richard Martin's questions in full, but it will be sufficient to indicate where necessary their general tenor. The reply of the Native Commissioner for Gwelo, one of the eight cited by Sir Richard Martin, is a typical one. He says: "It [compulsory labour] did exist for all the purposes named to the extent that the supply was not equal to the demand. The contract wages were 10 shillings [per month?]. The period three months with food. In many cases, I believe, the wages were more than doubled by the employers when the boys proved themselves worthy of it."

This is one of the Commissioners on whom the Deputy Commissioner relies for support of his contention, and it shows—what? That when the Matabele would not work they were compelled to do so. This is undoubtedly compulsory labour, but it is nothing more than what must happen in every State, whether the population be white, black, or yellow. Take our own country: a man who refuses to work is arrested and sent to prison as a rogue and a vagabond. In Rhodesia a native who declined to work was taken before the Native Commissioner and sent off to some mine or public work close at hand, paid at what, to him, were very high rates, fed and housed, and then at the end of three months he was allowed to return to his kraal, where he was permitted to remain for the rest of the year. So by working for a quarter of a year, a native in Rhodesia was allowed to follow his own bent for nine months. There are many persons nearer home who would be delighted to work under the same conditions.

Before passing on, it should be mentioned that throughout the whole report of Sir Richard Martin there is not one word about any act of cruelty, or even harshness, towards the native by the white employers, and yet we may be certain that all the white men throughout the country were not spotless. There were, doubtless, black sheep among them who abused the natives under their control, but this was not sufficiently significant in the opinion of the Deputy Commissioner to justify special mention in his report. Men, however, who

abused the natives with whom they came in contact did exist in the country, and possibly it was some of them who gave "confidential evidence" to the Deputy Commissioner: that would be in accord with the rest of their conduct. It was this compulsory labour, then, which existed in Rhodesia,—a form of compulsion not nearly so severe as that which is in vogue in England and other civilised countries, where if a man will not work he must either starve or go to prison; and yet it led to vigorous denunciations being hurled at the heads of the Chartered Company for encouraging slavery in their territories.

The reply of the resident magistrate at Bulawayo, who, according to Sir Richard Martin, avoids the question put to him, was couched in the following terms: "Inspectors of police were sent to the different kraals to obtain labour in proportion to the number of male adults at each kraal. The various inspectors assure me that no difficulty whatever was experienced in obtaining boys. The chief was simply informed that he was expected to supply a certain number of boys, at the same time being assured that they would each receive a weekly [monthly?] wage (never less than ten shillings with food and lodgings), and that they would be well treated. A large number of natives were thus induced to come in to work, many coming in quite voluntarily. In no case, however, to my knowledge, and I have specially questioned the various inspectors on the point, has physical force been used to compel the natives to come in and work."

This statement of Mr P. G. Smith, the magistrate, is as clear and categorical a reply to Sir Richard Martin's question as could be desired, and yet the Deputy Commissioner saw fit to say that Mr Smith "avoided the question." Such an unfortunate remark as this only gave some grounds for the charges of bias against Sir Richard Martin which were, quite unjustifiably, being freely circulated in Bulawayo at this time. Mr Smith states distinctly and clearly what happened, and goes into greater detail than any of his *confrères*, and yet he is the one mentioned as "avoiding the question"!

The conclusions at which Sir Richard Martin arrived at were—“(1) That compulsory labour undoubtedly did exist in Matabeleland, if not in Mashonaland; (2) that labour was procured by the various Native Commissioners for the various requirements of the Government, mining companies, and private persons; and (3) that the Native Commissioners in the first instance endeavoured to obtain labour through the indunas, but failing that they procured it by force.” The first paragraph, showing that labour was compulsory in Rhodesia, can be passed over without comment, for it is so all over the world. The second paragraph must also be conceded, for it was one of the chief duties of their office for the Native Commissioners to ensure a plentiful supply of native labour for the mines and public works; but with regard to the third conclusion at which Sir Richard Martin arrives it must be challenged. Not that it is totally wrong—if it were, its refutation would be all the easier

—but it is set forward in such a manner as to lead those who do not happen to have the replies of the Native Commissioners before them, to form an erroneous opinion as to what really occurred.

The only grounds that the Deputy Commissioner had for making this statement, presuming that his anonymous witnesses did not give him “confidential evidence” on the point, are in the letters of the native commissioners for the Insiza and Umsingwane districts. The former stated that when the indunas told him that they had no control over their people, and that they declined to work, then, and only then, he sent the native police to collect the labour. Mr H. M. Jackson, the Native Commissioner at Umsingwane, stated that “compulsion of a more direct nature was used upon the young and idle, who were made to work for two or three months in the year at a wage of ten shillings a-month with food, under registration.” The truth of the matter is, that the Matabele as a nation had no stomach for work or for anything but fighting and debauchery, and the British South Africa Company took the same course with them as a father in this country would take with a son who refused to support himself when means were offered him—they compelled them to do so.

To pass on to the second section of Sir Richard Martin's report, which dealt with the cattle question. It was prefaced by the remark that his report would be entirely confined to Matabeleland, as it appeared from the various reports that no difficulty had ever been experienced in Mashonaland with regard to it,

owing in a great measure to the comparatively small number of cattle owned by the people. In the opening sentences Sir Richard refers to the taking over of the cattle by the Chartered Company at the conclusion of the war in 1893, and challenges Lord Grey's statement that "nearly all the cattle in the country belonged to the king." The Deputy Commissioner considered that the way in which the Company went to work was a fatal one, and in this he would seem to be more or less correct. Looking at it without bias, it would seem that while the bulk of the cattle was owned by the king, there was a quantity which was the private property of the natives, and, unwittingly no doubt, the Native Commissioners fell into the error of considering all the cattle in the country as the personal property of the king. Possibly they found it hard to get information of a trustworthy character as to which of the herds were owned by Lobengula and which were not, so they lumped them all together and claimed the whole on behalf of the Company, — a rough-and-ready method whose only defence is its expediency, which is no defence at all. This latter was the view that Sir Richard Martin took, and it certainly seems to have a great deal in its favour. As has been said already, had the Company taken possession of all the cattle in the country immediately on the conclusion of the war of 1893 as the "spoils of war," the natives would have recognised their right to do so, but it was the hesitating, half-hearted policy of the authorities that first led the natives to think themselves badly treated.

As regards the third portion of Sir Richard Martin's report, the granting of a monopoly to Mr Homan, it is necessary to go into some particulars to make it explicit. Mr E. E. Homan was a trader in Mashonaland who, early in April of 1895, wrote to Mr George Pauling, who was at that time a member of the executive council at Salisbury, suggesting that the Chartered Company might effect a considerable saving if the Native Commissioners in the Mazoe, Hartley, Lo Magondi, Charter, and Marandellas districts of Mashonaland were given instructions that the natives in their respective districts had to hand over the "hut-tax" in grain at a central spot in each district to Mr Homan, who would receive it and grant receipts for it, the price to be fixed between the Government and himself. This would of course place in the hands of Mr Homan the principal grain supplies of the districts named, and so give him a great advantage over the other traders; but this arrangement was sanctioned by the council on April 23, 1895, for a period of six months. On July 25 things went a step further, for the Civil Commissioner at Salisbury was informed by the Administrator that he was not to issue any more trading licences for the Charter and Sabi districts except to Mr Homan,—a step which naturally excited a good deal of opposition and not a little heartburning among the traders already settled in those two districts, who feared that when their licences expired they would not be renewed. Consequently an agitation against this monopoly was commenced, and as a result it was withdrawn by the Administrator on September 30,

1895. Things were not allowed to rest here, however. It was thought by many people, though Earl Grey strongly denied the correctness of this, that the granting of this concession was against the 20th article of the charter, which begins by premising that nothing in the charter should be deemed to authorise the Company to set up or grant any monopoly of trade save in certain cases, such as the grant of concessions for banks, railways, tramways, &c.; and on the matter being brought before Mr Justice Vintcent of the High Court of Matabeleland, he, after careful deliberation, decided that such a grant was *ultra vires*, and that the Chartered Company had exceeded their powers in granting it. It was at once relinquished. In this view of the matter Sir Richard Martin concurred, and thereupon the matter was allowed to drop. The Company, or its representatives at Salisbury, had unwittingly erred, but so soon as the fault was discovered it was remedied.

The last part of Sir Richard Martin's report dealt with the causes of the rebellion, and as these have already been considered at length, suffice it to say that the Deputy Commissioner considered the causes to have been — (1) The fact that the Matabele had never been thoroughly subdued; (2) the labour regulations; (3) the cattle regulations; and (4) the rinderpest and the slaughter of the cattle. The raid, he considered, merely afforded the opportunity, and was not a primary cause. This report as a whole was forwarded to England for the consideration of the Select Committee on February 27, 1897; and about the same time the report of a committee

which had been appointed in Bulawayo, composed jointly of representatives of the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce, the local Chamber of Mines, and the Sanitary Board (at that time the municipal authority of the town), to collect evidence to be submitted to the parliamentary committee regarding the administration of Rhodesia by the British South Africa Company, was also forwarded to England. This committee first met on November 20, 1896, and was composed of the following gentlemen: Mr J. Mudie Thompson (chairman), Colonel Spreckley, and Messrs J. Sampson, P. V. Weir, A. M'Kinnon, S. Redrup, and O. R. Armstrong.

In view of the fact that Sir Richard Martin had inferred in his report that there were persons in the country who were afraid to come forward and give evidence antagonistic to the British South Africa Company, a paragraph in the report of this committee is significant. It reads, "It will be seen that the British South Africa Company has given the utmost accessibility to every individual who desired to present either a suggestion or a grievance." This testimony considerably weakens the allegations of the Deputy Commissioner.

The evidence submitted to this committee was of a voluminous character, and while several suggestions were made for minor alterations in the legal and representative conditions which prevailed, yet it was nearly always stated by the witnesses that they had never known the Government to fail to consider any suggestions that were made to them for improvements in their administration. In fact, the Chartered

Company and Mr Rhodes realised that the conditions under which the country was governed were not ideal ones. Mr Rhodes, in the speech he made at Colonel Napier's banquet at the conclusion of the Matabeleland rebellion, and to which reference has already been made, said, referring to the government by charter, that such a form was only temporary, and that such government was only the first step towards government by ballot and popular control. Many of the witnesses who appeared before the Bulawayo committee had lived for some years in other British colonies, and these gave interesting comparisons between the conditions under which settlers lived and worked in Rhodesia and those obtaining in other colonies. These comparisons were nearly always in favour of Rhodesia. The evidence bearing on this subject of Messrs Schreiner, Loew, and Ventner before the parliamentary committee has already been given.

When this evidence and Sir Richard Martin's report reached England, their purport was forwarded to the head office of the British South Africa Company, the directors of which wrote a letter to the Colonial Office under date of March 24, 1897, in which they stated that the suggestion made in Sir Richard Martin's report, that a system of compulsory labour had existed in any part of Rhodesia, had astounded them, and they could not credit the statements made. "Certainly," the letter went on, "no authority whatever, direct or indirect, has been given by the Company for such a practice, and if it has prevailed, it has been wholly without the consent or knowledge of the Board." This flat

denial of the charges of Sir Richard Martin pointed to the fact that there was some serious misapprehension somewhere; but the Company upheld their contention very stoutly, and continuing in this letter of March 24 stated that the directors had had an interview with Dr Jameson on the point, and that he said he did not believe that any system of compulsory labour could have prevailed without his knowledge when he was acting as Administrator. In conclusion, the Company informed the Colonial Office that they had ordered the Native Commissioners and magistrates whose reports had formed the basis of Sir Richard Martin's report to come to England to give evidence on the point before the Select Committee, then sitting, and they requested that the Colonial Secretary should order the attendance of Sir Richard Martin likewise. Unfortunately for all parties concerned, but especially for the British South Africa Company, which was thereby debarred from clearing itself from the charge, the Committee decided to drop the second part of its inquiry. And so this vexed question remained, and remains, unsettled.

That there was compulsory labour of the type hinted at by Sir Richard Martin is disproved by the weight of evidence, so far as an impartial observer is able to find; but that the natives were compelled to work and to forsake for a few weeks every year their habits of sloth and idleness is certain, and it is to the credit of the British South Africa Company that it was so. Had it been otherwise, and had they allowed the natives

to live on in their kraals in their own way, there would not have been one rebellion but several. Without the necessity for working the Matabele would not have continued long without fighting, either among themselves or against the whites or the neighbouring tribes. The greatest thinkers of all countries and all ages are agreed on the point that a life without work is not good for any man, and assuredly it would be the worst thing that could happen for the Matabeleland native population and for all who laboured in the same country with them. A carefully regulated system of making the natives work, under safeguards and efficient Government supervision, is the one great thing that is needed in Rhodesia, not only for the prosperity of the white settlers in the country, and the opening up of the country itself, but for the natives as well; and the only manner in which the Matabele can be weaned from their ingrained habits of war, rapine, and plunder is to make it necessary for them to work.

The Chartered Company have recognised the truth of this from the first. The step that they took in making the hut-tax—the only way in which the natives directly contribute to the revenue of the country—payable in money in place of cattle or grain was a wise one; for it meant that those who refused to work and earn the money necessary to pay the tax, which could easily be done by a few weeks' work either at the mines or on the different public works, would be punished for not having the money when the time came round,

unless they could produce a sufficient explanation of their condition.

To environ the natives round with civilising conditions, to teach them that those who will not work will be treated as rogues and vagabonds, and at the same time to offer them the means of working peaceably and under good conditions, is one of the best works that the British South Africa Company can accomplish in the mighty territory over which they have control; and to their credit it must be said that they have recognised this obligation from the first, and attempted to carry it out in spite of both the natural disinclination of the natives themselves for manual labour and a great deal of ill-advised interference from outsiders in this country.

It must not be for a moment supposed, however, that the present writer is encouraging anything in the nature of slavery, in however mild a form. Far from it, for the proudest boast of a British colony is that in its territory all men, irrespective of colour, of race, or of religion, are alike free; but they must work if they would live, and those who will not, be they English-born or Matabele, must either be made to do so, or in default must suffer. The curse of any country is its idlers.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PROGRESS OF THE COUNTRY.

THROUGHOUT the year of 1897, in spite of the many set-backs it received, the railway from the south was steadily advancing towards Bulawayo, which it eventually reached on October 19 ; and on November 4, 1897, the line was formally declared open for traffic amid a scene of great popular enthusiasm. The track for some distance outside Bulawayo had been brightened by the erection of venetian poles and lines of bunting, while the engine hauling the first train to arrive at the town was also gaily decorated. A large party of notabilities from England had gone out to take part in the festivities, which were kept up for some days. The construction of this railway between Vryburg and Bulawayo was a record-breaking piece of work, especially when the enormous difficulties, engineering and otherwise, are taken into consideration. From the time of the commencement of the work to that of laying the last rail at Bulawayo only twelve months passed, during which time a distance of no less than 335 miles was bridged by the railway. It was a great

achievement, and the resulting benefit to the town has been abundantly seen; for though Mashonaland was colonised some four years before its sister province, and active mine-prospecting was commenced there some time previous to the Matabeleland war of occupation, yet it has been the latter part of Rhodesia which has been the quicker developed, and it was a Matabele mine, the Geelong, in the Gwanda district, that was the first to commence making a systematic output of gold.

The railway to Bulawayo, too, has been from the first worked with the utmost smoothness, and but little fault has been found with it; while, on the other hand, the railway which was advancing very slowly from the East Coast towards Salisbury has been a veritable bone of contention ever since it was first commenced. First the Chartered Company and the settlers in Mashonaland came into conflict over the dilatory manner, as it seemed to the inhabitants of the country, in which the work was being carried out; and then, when the railway was at length opened as far as Umtali, endless disputes and controversies took place about the rates charged for the conveyance of goods over it. It must be remembered that the gauge of the line was only a two feet one, which, in the opinion of many settlers in Mashonaland, formed the initial mistake. Consequently only a limited quantity of freight could be carried at once, so that the railway company had to charge high rates to make the line anything like payable. On the other hand, the railway to Bulawayo was of the standard Cape gauge, and therefore much

more powerful engines could be used and heavier trains drawn, which meant the lowering of the rates and the acceleration of transport over the line.

With the rates from the Cape to Bulawayo lower than those from Beira to Umtali, about one-seventh of the distance, the residents in Mashonaland, not unnaturally perhaps, got it into their heads that they were being very badly treated when compared with the way in which the settlers in Matabeleland were being favoured. However, Messrs Pauling & Co., the constructors and lessees of the Beira Railway, made several concessions in the matter of rates, and the authorities gave the assurance that so soon as ever it was possible the line should be widened to the standard gauge, and in the meantime it was steadily pushed forward towards Salisbury.

So soon as the railway to Bulawayo reached that town most people living there looked forward to seeing trade advance by leaps and bounds; but this did not prove to be the case, and those who expected to see Bulawayo develop mushroom-like so soon as the railway was opened were doomed to disappointment. A far healthier state of things prevailed,—a steady and systematic progress being made, instead of the place expanding in the rapid manner of some of the towns on the American and Australian gold-fields. Instead of the capital of Matabeleland becoming little more than a city of huts and hovels, it developed quietly and substantially; for while there was no mad rush to build in the town, such buildings as were erected were of solid yet orna-

mental construction, and of such a character as might do credit to any town in any State.

While signs of progress were abundantly to be observed in the country, there was still an outcry of bad times by the traders and commercial classes generally. This seemed strange at first sight, for the mining industry was going ahead rapidly, and half-a-dozen mines in the country were quickly approaching the crushing stage, when the real prosperity of Matabeleland might be looked upon as commencing, and people were flocking up to Rhodesia. There were many reasons for this outcry, however, which was in reality well founded, and one of the chief of these reasons has already been outlined in a previous chapter. Another cause was the shyness of the general public, both in England and on the Continent, to have anything to do with the new colony until its resources were proved. The investor, knowing but little about Rhodesia, feared to risk his money until he had tangible proof of the likelihood of his getting a return for it. Those who were in a position to know what the country was like were fully convinced of its great prospects and its great potential value in the future history of the world; but this latter class was but comparatively a small one, and there were many interested persons at work belittling Rhodesia and its resources, so that the uninformed knew not which to believe—the parties who spoke of the hundreds of miles of gold-reefs in the country, or those who declared that there was no gold whatever in the land, and that if there ever had been,

the ancient miners had taken it all thousands of years ago.

The fact that the mines in Rhodesia had been so slowly opened up was also made a great deal of by the persons who were either ignorant of the many stupendous difficulties that had to be surmounted, or else were dishonest enough to pass them by deliberately to bolster up their case the better. About this time it was a common thing for those lately returned from the country to be besieged with inquiries as to "whether there really was gold in Rhodesia?" and to one fresh from viewing gold-reef upon gold-reef in an unbroken succession the question seemed absurd to a degree. Another cause that may have had a great deal to do with the cry of stagnant trade raised by the smaller traders was the presence in all the towns and on the principal mining-fields of agents for commercial firms in Port Elizabeth and other parts of Cape Colony, who took wholesale orders for goods of every description and had them sent forward, which they were able to do at a cheaper rate than the traders in Bulawayo or Salisbury could supply them for.

Turning to the administration of the country, it was realised by almost all that after the Jameson raid some change would have to be made in the form of government, so as to give the Imperial authorities greater control of the forces in Rhodesia and to prevent a recurrence of such an affair. Mr Rhodes and the British South Africa Company were among the first to see that alterations would have to be made in the charter, and it is a fact

worth noticing that the proposal for the formation of a quasi-representative council in Rhodesia first emanated from the Chartered Company. The Imperial Government was in rather a difficult situation with regard to Rhodesia and its administration. The Government saw that the Colonial Office must have a greater say in the administration of the British South Africa Company, and yet it must not, either actually or by implication, assume any financial liability with regard to it. To ask whether or not a country can be controlled without some financial liability being undertaken is to raise a question which is outside the present limits; but it may be pointed out that the last thing in the world that the shareholders or directors of the Chartered Company desired was that the Imperial Government should assume any financial liability in Rhodesia, though, as has been said, it was seen that changes in the administration of the country were imperative.

Having this end in view, the British South Africa Company forwarded certain proposals to the Colonial Office about the beginning of 1898 for the consideration of the Imperial Government. These proposals included the reconstitution of the Administrator's Council by the addition of four elected members—being two from Matabeleland and two from Mashonaland—and as many nominated by the Company as would preserve to them a majority so long as they were responsible for meeting the expenditure. The Colonial Office provisionally accepted this offer, and on February 24, 1898, Mr Chamberlain formulated a series of proposals for the modification of the

charter, which were forwarded to Sir Alfred Milner, who had been appointed High Commissioner at Cape Town in succession to Lord Rosmead, and received his approval.

In addition to accepting the offer of the Chartered Company mentioned above, the Colonial Secretary proposed to modify the arrangements then existing in Southern Rhodesia (meaning that portion of the country south of the Zambesi river), so that the control of the High Commissioner might be more direct, and might be based upon full information obtained locally through an imperial officer specially appointed and stationed at Salisbury for that purpose. It was suggested that the imperial officer named should be styled the Resident Commissioner, and appointed and paid by the Crown, while his powers and limitations were set forth at length. The chief of these limitations were, that he should not interfere with the administration of the territory except with regard to the employment of the armed forces therein, and that he should have no veto on the action of the Administrators or the Council. It was further proposed that another imperial officer should be appointed and paid by the Crown to command all the armed forces in the country.

It was believed that by these measures the extensive powers which were possessed by the Crown under the charter would be rendered effective without the Government assuming any responsibilities to the shareholders or debenture-holders of the Company. "That responsibility," declared Mr Chamberlain in the communication under notice,

“must remain with the Board of Directors of the British South Africa Company.” The Colonial Secretary went on to say that it was desirable that the Imperial Government should have more ample information than they had hitherto been able to obtain as to the transactions and general financial situation of the Company. After remarking that the precedent created by the India Act of 1784 for the control of the affairs of the East India Company (by which a board of control, composed of members of the Government of the day, was constituted) naturally suggested itself, Mr Chamberlain remarked that to apply such a system in its entirety to the British South Africa Company would amount to the creation of a separate public office with full responsibility for the government and revenues of the territories in question, and therefore, by implication, with a certain amount of responsibility for the finances of the Company; so that it was not proposed at that time to do more than to define explicitly, and to strengthen where necessary, the existing powers of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and to indicate the way in which they would be exercised. These proposals of Mr Chamberlain eventually formed the basis of the Order in Council of 1898, which constituted the first step in the history of Rhodesia towards popular representation on the governing council of the colony.

Another question that concerned Rhodesia intimately about this time was the scarcity of native labour for the mines and other works. With a

native population estimated approximately by the Native Commissioners at over 300,000 persons, it seems strange that there ever should be a scarcity of labour in the country, but yet it is so; and, in fact, one of the most worrying questions with which the government at Salisbury have so far been confronted has been that of the native labour supply and the provision of enough black labour to keep the mines working. It should be remembered that a native at most only works for about three months in the year at the mines, and by that time, having earned enough to pay his hut-tax and to keep him in luxury for the remainder of the year, he returns to his kraal. This means that every mine in the country must have at least four completely new staffs in twelve months, so that to begin with, each mine uses four times as much labour as it otherwise would if the natives were content to work constantly. Then, again, but few of the boys tried, comparatively speaking, and referring especially to the Mashona tribe, make good miners, though they are excellent husbandmen, and in this respect they are supported by a large section of the Matabele tribe: in fact, the best native miners yet tried in the country are those of the Shangaan and other trans-Zambesian tribes.

Then there is the serious competition of the Rand and other goldfields in South Africa to reckon with, which, by offering higher wages and more tempting conditions, manage to secure a large proportion of the native labour that would otherwise be available for Rhodesian use; but it seems that,

properly organised and administered, there should be native workmen enough in South and Central Africa to supply all possible requirements for some years to come. Probably when, within a few years now, the Trans-continental Railway gets working, say, as far as the southern shores of Lake Tanganyika, one of the first benefits Rhodesia, and indeed the whole of South Africa, will feel from it will be in the tapping of a plentiful supply of native labour. It may be said, therefore,—bearing in mind that as time goes on, and Rhodesia gets brought more and more into line with civilisation, the Matabele and other tribes in the country will feel the necessity for constantly working more than they do at present,—that this labour difficulty is only a temporary one; but at the time of writing it is a very pressing one, and has been for two years or so—in fact, ever since the development on a large scale of the Rhodesian mines commenced. So great a difficulty has the scarcity of native labourers on the mines been on occasions, that when the extension of the railway northwards from Bulawayo was commenced the constructors had to give a guarantee that the necessary black labour should not be drawn from Rhodesia, but imported either from Bechuanaland or the north.

Native labour on the mines in South Africa seems to be a necessity, and one that cannot be dispensed with, but why, save for the climate, it should be so seems puzzling when the conditions that prevail on the other goldfields of the world are examined. Indian gold-mines, it is true, are extensively manned

by natives, and a certain proportion of blacks are employed on the Western Australian fields, though they probably do not number so many as the white miners; while on the principal of the remaining fields—such as California, the Klondike, and British Columbia—white labour is exclusively used. The moral of this seems to be, then, that if a goldfield is situated on tropical regions where natives abound, white labourers either could not work or it would not pay a company to import white labourers, as the work can be done both better and cheaper by the blacks. If the blacks cannot be obtained, however, it would seem the wiser course to make an effort to get together a staff of acclimatised white men who could be depended on to work permanently rather than to “close down” the mines, as has been done in two prominent cases in Rhodesia lately.

The “land-title question” was also one that was agitating Rhodesia in the early days of 1898, as much difference of opinion seemed to exist as to what was the exact interpretation of the rather ambiguously worded “Victoria agreement,” which was hastily drawn up and given to those residents in Mashonaland who volunteered to form the pioneer column to Matabeleland in 1893.

There is another aspect of the land question in Rhodesia, however, which has not received the consideration it deserves, and yet is far more important than any dispute about the land titles, and that is the way in which the land in the country is parcelled out. In the early days of the Chartered Company's taking over the country, companies were formed in

London with large capitals, and these were granted immense tracts of land which they were to exploit to their best advantage, the British South African Company only reserving to themselves the right to one-half of the profits of any minerals found on the land. It has come about, therefore, that the companies have been very reluctant to part with their land, and though they have in some instances allowed farms to be leased from them, yet they retain the freehold, and thus a settler in the country has but little opportunity for acquiring a small plot for himself. This seems to be, surely, the wrong way to open up a country. Freehold plots of convenient size at moderate rentals on easy terms of payment should be offered as inducements for emigrants to go out to Rhodesia and help to populate and open up the country. The wisdom of this course has been recognised in the United States, where even the smallest farmer in the Western States owns his "quarter-lot," and in most of the British colonies—such as British Columbia, Canada, and the Australian States; and it would seem that it would have been much better had the British South Africa Company reserved at least certain areas in each district for this purpose. They must be presumed to know their business best, however, and they have not seen fit to do this, but have preferred to allow companies and syndicates to become possessed of mighty tracts of country that are to-day virtually closed to settlement. As an instance of this, a reference to the latest Bulawayo Directory shows that the British West Charterland

Company holds concession rights over 75,000 square miles of country in N'Gamiland; the North Charterland Company has "mining and surface" rights over 10,000 square miles; the Rhodesia Concessions Company has similar rights over 600 square miles in Northern Rhodesia; the Rhodesian Exploration and Development Company has either a whole or a half interest in an area exceeding 500 square miles,—and this list might be greatly prolonged.

Of course, the obvious retort to such figures is that the grants have been made to these corporations in order that they might develop the territory under their control, and then, when it was ripe for settlement, throw it open in small lots.

This is without doubt the view that the Chartered Company took when the grants were made; but unfortunately this has not been done, and there is no actual evidence that it ever will be: and hence it is that, save in a very few instances, small farmers have been unable to get their land otherwise than on lease. There seems to be an opinion growing up in all civilised countries that the old territorial system of holding land, and the consequent formation of a landowning community with large estates, is a mistaken one, and that all the inhabitants of a State should have an opportunity of owning small plots of land if they wish; and yet in this virgin country of Rhodesia the old conditions are threatening to spring up. This is not written in a spirit of socialism in any shape or form, but it does seem to an unbiassed mind that a country, the whole of which practically is owned by financial corporations,

is saddled with a great disadvantage as compared with one such as, say, Victoria, where, away from the towns, almost every man is his own freeholder.

It is not too late even now for the British South Africa Company to intervene and make it compulsory for these landowning companies to throw open portions at least of their vast tracts in small allotments of about 500 acres, and until this is done Rhodesia will appeal in vain, it is to be feared, to the great body of men who form the emigrant portion of this country. Of course, with its stupendous mineral wealth Rhodesia is not so dependent on the agricultural classes as a purely farming country like Manitoba or as some of the Australian colonies; but as the mining population and the industrial classes increase in the country, the farmer will be needed to grow the food-stuffs necessary for the support of the colony,—for it is out of the question to suppose that, with the conditions of climate, soil, and irrigation which prevail in Rhodesia, that colony will be content for all time to import its grain and other crops from over the seas. Rather will it be able to send its produce home to the mother-country.

The above remarks are penned in no spirit of hostility to the British South Africa Company, whose excellent work in obtaining and developing this fine country demands the praise of all true empire lovers, but it is an attempt to point out an evil which is taking root in the country. The landowning companies are naturally not blind to their own interests, and must in course of time throw their estates open to settlers; but what guarantee is there at the

present time that this step will be taken for years to come, or, in fact, that the land will ever be sold freehold? It seems more reasonable to presume that, especially with regard to the land around the principal gold-belts, which may be looked upon as the first that will appreciate in value, the companies will prefer to let it on lease, and so ensure an annual income from the ground-rents,—for of course their first and principal consideration is, and must be, the benefit of their shareholders. One does not grudge these companies holding this land, for in a measure they have earned it by their support with both their money and their influence, when, had they not come to its rescue, the country would have been on the verge of bankruptcy; but it would be well if the Chartered Company were to make a stipulation that land should be sold in the different districts to suitable purchasers who gave proofs of a *bona fide* intention to settle on it and cultivate it, at a price to be fixed by the Government officials on the spot,—these prices not to be so high on the one hand as to be prohibitive, nor so low on the other as to offer no return to the proprietary companies.

As 1898 progressed, the thoughts of all in Rhodesia, and of great numbers in London and other European centres, began to be turned to four mines in Matabeleland—the Geelong, the Tebekwe, the Bonsor, and the Dunraven—which were erecting gold-crushing mills, while many other mines were hurrying forward towards the same end. The Geelong mine was the first to make a return, which was published in London on October 8, 1898. I

showed that in the month of September the mill had crushed 2260 tons of quartz, gaining 1417 ounces of gold, an equivalent of $12\frac{1}{2}$ pennyweights of gold for each ton of quartz crushed, to which has to be added a further 7 pennyweights of gold left behind in each ton of "tailings" to be treated by the cyanide or other process,—thus giving a total return of nearly an ounce of gold for every ton of quartz crushed.

This result was looked upon in London as being very satisfactory, though the shares in the Geelong Gold-mining Company did not immediately show any appreciation—a fact which was accounted for in financial circles by the statement that the result was very similar to that which had been expected. The Tebekwe mine quickly followed in the wake of the Geelong, by making a return which was of an equally satisfactory character; and the Bonsor and Dunraven mines, which are controlled by the same group as that owning the Geelong mine, were soon making regular returns likewise, so that by the end of the year these four mines, aided by sundry small returns from various quarters, had gained a total output of 17,613 ounces, which, taking the standard price per ounce of gold at £4 sterling, meant that in four months Rhodesia had added over £70,000 to the wealth of the world, or at the rate of nearly a quarter of a million a-year,—a triumphant retort to those whose cry had for long been that there was no gold in the country.

As 1899 went on, however, labour troubles began to show themselves once more, until the

monthly output, which in March of that year had risen to 6614 ounces, fell in August to a little over 3000 ounces,—this falling off being principally due to two of the mines, the Bonsor and the Dunraven, having been compelled to stop their mills, or, in the parlance of the miners, to “close down,” owing to the scarcity of native labour. This scarcity is accounted for by different authorities in various ways, but the chief cause seems to have been the return of the natives to their homes in order to get in their harvest of grain, which was then ripe; but so soon as this was done the natives seemed, or at least a large proportion of them seemed, perfectly willing to commence working again. With regard to the Bonsor mine, there was another cause which led to the lack of natives. This was an explosion which unfortunately occurred on it in the early part of 1899, and was attended with loss of life, which led to the mine being looked upon as “bewitched” by the superstitious natives. The Government and the various Chambers of Mines in the country saw that some steps would have to be taken to prevent this falling off in the native labour-supply becoming an annual affair, and, after some considerable correspondence and debate, a “native labour bureau,” by which it was hoped that the labour difficulty would be surmounted, was formed. At the time of writing, this bureau has only just got into working order, so that it is impossible to say whether this will be the case or not, but it is devoutly hoped by all who have the welfare of the country at heart that the means taken to ensure

a plentiful labour-supply for the future will be successful.

While these events were taking place in Matabeleland, the railway from the East Coast was rapidly approaching Salisbury, and on the Queen's birthday (May 24) the line was formally opened for traffic amid scenes of rejoicing similar to those which characterised the arrival of the line at Bulawayo. Now that each portion of Rhodesia has got its railway to the coast, it seems as if the tide of misfortune and difficulty which has for so long dogged the country is about to turn, and a wave of prosperity such as was looked for in the early days of the Pioneers is about to set in. There have been other causes, however, which have delayed this, as will be explained later, but those who know the country best are certain that the period of its prosperity cannot now be long delayed.

CHAPTER XVII.

MR RHODES AND THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT.

EXACTLY when the first conception of a railway line to stretch across Africa from north to south first took shape in the brain of Mr Rhodes is hard to say, but undoubtedly the trans-continental telegraph, which he announced his intention of constructing some ten years ago, was in a measure intended to be the forerunner of this other larger enterprise. Mr Rhodes realised that one of the first things required for the rapid civilisation of the country which bore his name was the means of quick communication with the south, and as the first step in this communication he pushed forward the erection of the telegraph wire and the railway. Probably when he commenced the former he had no idea of carrying it through to Egypt, but it is easy to imagine how such a suggestion would naturally evolve itself once the building of the line was started. At first it may be considered that Salisbury was intended as the northernmost limit of the line, and then, as the British South Africa Company assumed the administration of the territories north

of the Zambesi, the wire was carried gradually forward towards the Central African Lakes, until at last it was decided to connect the Cape with Cairo and the northern ports of Egypt.

Mr Rhodes's appeal for funds for laying and maintaining this wire met with but slight response on the London Stock Exchange, for the idea of a telegraph wire right across Africa in those days seemed little more than an idle dream. The Soudan was then the headquarters of the Khalifa, and the dervish power in that region had yet to be broken; and then there was the vast stretch of unknown country in Central Africa to be crossed, so that it is no wonder that matter-of-fact business men were shy of putting their money into such an undertaking, especially as the prospective profits did not seem to be great. To-day, however, *nous avons changé tout cela*; every one who knows anything of Africa realises that the telegraph line will be working from Cairo to the Cape in a very few years now, and that all the remaining difficulties will be successfully surmounted. In fact, what Mr Rhodes perceived six or seven years ago all the world admits to-day. That is the key-note of Mr Rhodes's life—he can always see a decade ahead of the rest of the world. As the London Stock Exchange would not provide the money, Mr Rhodes provided it himself, and the line was quickly carried forward. The construction to Salisbury was commenced in 1890, at the beginning of 1892 the line reached that town, and at the end of 1898 its length was 3613 miles. It had arrived at Lake Nyassa, and its

construction to Lake Tanganyika was being undertaken. So much for the progress of the telegraph line.

As for the trans-continental railway, as has already been stated it reached Bulawayo in November 1897, at the time when in the north of the continent Lord Kitchener was pushing forward his railway from Wady Halfa to Berber with the primary object of striking a decisive blow at the power of the Khalifa; so Mr Rhodes lost no time in preparing to move his end of the railway farther northwards towards the Zambesi. Nominally the moving spirit in the railway extension to the north is the Bechuanaland Railway Company, but in reality it is Mr Rhodes, who by the very force of his personality has convinced nearly all who have come into contact with him, not only that the line can be constructed without much difficulty, but also that it will pay once it has been opened for traffic.

When the rebellion in Mashonaland was at length thoroughly over, Mr Rhodes was at liberty to turn his undivided attention to the question of the railway, and so in the spring of 1898 he came to London for the purpose of opening negotiations with the Imperial Government. As soon as he arrived he wrote a letter to the Colonial Secretary, dated April 28, 1898, placing before the Government certain proposals with regard to the extension of the railway from Bulawayo towards Lake Tanganyika, which he had determined on as the first portion of the line to be constructed, and inviting the co-operation of the Imperial Government in the scheme. In this letter

Mr Rhodes stated that the distance to be traversed by this part of the line would be between 700 and 800 miles, and while no survey had been made of the country, yet trustworthy information had been obtained as to the character of the land and the difficulties to be overcome, and also that these difficulties would probably be no greater than those which had already been successfully surmounted in the section between Mafeking and Bulawayo. Mr Rhodes had received a letter from Sir Gordon Sprigg, then Premier at the Cape, saying that should he be successful in obtaining the help and countenance he required from the Imperial Government, he—Sir Gordon—would be prepared to confer with his colleagues in the Cape Cabinet with a view to submitting proposals to the local parliament under which the Government of the colony might practically contribute towards the cost of the work of the extension, thus recognising the advantages which would accrue to the colony from the construction of the line. A copy of this letter was enclosed in Mr Rhodes's letter to the Colonial Office.

Mr Rhodes in this letter went on to say that he estimated the net cost of the construction of the line to Lake Tanganyika at about two millions sterling, basing his estimate on the fact that the average cost per mile of the existing portion of the railway had been, approximately, £3000. With regard to raising this money, Mr Rhodes stated that he should recommend the Bechuanaland Railway Company to obtain the sum by a further issue of debentures, which would be secured upon the whole of its assets and under-

taking, after provision had been made for safeguarding the rights of the holders of the existing debenture issue of two millions sterling. This meant that, subject to the existing debentures, the subscribers to the new issue would have offered them as security for their money the whole line of 580 miles from Vryburg to Bulawayo then built and being worked at a profit, as well as any further extension that might be made; the subsidies paid to the railway company by the Imperial Government and the British South Africa Company, which then amounted to £30,000 per annum; and blocks of valuable land in Bechuanaland and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, amounting in all to an aggregate area of 8000 square miles, thus making ample provision for the payment of the interest on the debenture issue.

The British South Africa Company was prepared to guarantee the interest upon the whole of the further issue of debentures required; and with the view to the creation of these debentures upon more favourable terms than would otherwise be possible, Mr Rhodes asked that the Imperial Government should give a collateral guarantee. This is an important point to be recollected in this correspondence between Mr Rhodes and the Imperial Government. He did not want the Government to give him a single halfpenny in cash: all he wanted them to do was to guarantee that, in the unlikely event of the Bechuanaland Railway Company failing to pay the interest on its debentures as it became due, and the British South Africa Company failing to meet its guarantee likewise, the British Government

should promise to pay the interest. How this request was received will be seen later. In the event of the Government acceding to the proposal, it was intended to issue the new debentures at the rate of either $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for a limited number of years, or of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent in perpetuity. The construction of the line, Mr Rhodes went on to say, would be carried out in sections of 200 miles at a time; and he further suggested that the funds for each section should be raised separately, and that it should be open for the Imperial Government to refuse to guarantee the interest upon the debentures to be issued for the construction of any section unless it was satisfied as to the commercial prospects of the proposed extension, and as to the nature of the contracts intended to be entered into. The first of these 200-mile sections, Mr Rhodes pointed out, would tap the valuable coalfields which had been discovered in the Bubi, Mafungabusi, Sengwe, and San-yati districts, and would also traverse the promising gold districts of Bembesi, the Lower Sebakwe, and the Lower Umfuli; while the second section would pass through the Lo Magondi district, which was rich in evidence of gold; while, once the Zambesi was crossed, the line would run through an excellent cattle country densely populated by natives.

Mr Rhodes then referred to the traffic which might be expected to accrue from this portion of the line, and the benefits which the railway would confer on South Africa generally with regard to the provision of native labour, after which he gave it as his opinion that each section of the line would

quickly pay its way, and cited in support of this the fact that for the first four months during which the line had been working to Bulawayo a net profit at the rate of £155,000 a-year had been earned, which, after the payment of the interest on the existing debentures, left a balance of £85,000,—a sum sufficient to pay the whole of the interest on the capital required to extend the line to Lake Tanganyika; so that the responsibility of the Imperial Government, in the event of its giving the guarantee asked for, would have been little more than nominal.

Mr Rhodes emphasised the desirability of the Imperial Government supporting this enterprise, if only to enable them to more effectually put down the slave-trade which was carried on in Central Africa,—which could be better done by means of a railway through the interior than by an expensive blockade by gunboats at the mouths of the rivers. He referred to the precedent of India, where it has long been the policy of the Government to encourage railway enterprise, and for which subsidies and guarantees had been freely given by the Imperial Government. Mr Rhodes also pointed out that it had long been the practice of the Bechuana-land Railway Company to purchase the whole of its material, plant, and rolling-stock in England, and said that there would be no change of policy in this respect. The construction of the line to Lake Tanganyika would, it was estimated, require 160,000 tons of material—apart from all rolling-stock—and the realisation of the project would thus confer a substantial benefit upon British trade.

In conclusion, Mr Rhodes summarised the principal heads of his letter, and pointed out that there was not the slightest probability of any payment ever being required to be made under the guarantee out of public funds, since this could only happen in the contingency of both the railway company and the British South Africa Company failing to meet their obligations,—“which,” added Mr Rhodes, “is almost absurd to contemplate.” He therefore submitted, in his own words, “that the present occasion furnishes a unique opportunity for the mutual co-operation of her Majesty’s Government, the Government of the Cape Colony, and the British South Africa Company, in an undertaking which will probably prove of far-reaching importance in its effect upon the development and consolidation of British interests in Africa.” This was the opening letter of the correspondence between Mr Rhodes and the Imperial Government on the subject of the railway, and was of such a character as to demand the best attention and consideration that the Government could give it; and this, no doubt, it received.

The reply of the Colonial Secretary was forwarded to Mr Rhodes on July 28, 1898, three months after the receipt of Mr Rhodes’s letter. This reply commenced by stating that Mr Chamberlain had been in communication with the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury in connection with Mr Rhodes’s proposals, and that her Majesty’s Government recognised that the ultimate responsibility for the peace, order, and good administration of the territory controlled by the British South Africa Company

rested with the Imperial Government, and that the establishment of communications by means of a railway was one of the most advantageous and most economical means of securing these objects, and therefore the scheme was one the conception of which commended itself to the Government. "Before, however," the letter continued, "the Government could invite Parliament to give its financial support, it must be furnished with more definite information on certain points."

The Government seemed favourably disposed to Mr Rhodes's suggestion that the railway should be built in sections of 200 miles each, and that any assistance given by the Government to one section should not commit them to giving assistance to any other section. The heads on which the Government desired further information were set out at length, and the leading condition that they made was, that an adequate survey of the country through which the railway was proposed to be taken for the first section of the line should be made, so that a trustworthy and fairly accurate estimate of the cost of its construction could be formed. Particulars were asked for as to the financial standing of the Bechuanaland Railway Company, its outstanding liabilities, and its ability to pay the interest on its proposed debentures, and also for similar evidence regarding the assets and liabilities of the British South Africa Company in the form of a certified balance-sheet. Finally, it was stated that the Government attached great importance to substantial co-operation on the part of the Cape Government. This letter, while showing

that the Cabinet regarded the construction of the line with a certain amount of favour, was couched in a studiously non-committal form until the further information asked for was supplied.

So soon as Mr Rhodes received this letter he prepared to return to South Africa to have the survey for the first section of the railway made, and to collect the other information required by the Government; and there the matter rested until January 1899, when Mr Rhodes once more returned to England and resumed the correspondence. In the meantime he had had the route of the railway to the Zambesi surveyed by Sir Charles Metcalfe, the consulting engineer to the British South Africa Company, and this gentleman in his report stated that he was of the opinion that the first section of the line beyond Bulawayo should be extended to 250 miles, so as to tap the extensive coalfields of the Mafungabusi district. He further stated that a detailed survey for the railway northwards from Bulawayo as far as Gwelo, a distance of 110 miles, had been completed under his supervision, and that his assistants were then at work on the detailed survey from Gwelo to the Zambesi; he had satisfied himself that no special engineering difficulties would be met with, and he estimated that the average cost of construction per mile would not exceed £3500. According to this estimate, the total cost of the construction of the 250-mile section would be, in round figures, £900,000.

Mr Rhodes, in a letter to the Colonial Office, dated January 16, 1899, submitted two proposals

to the Government for the raising of the necessary capital. By the first he proposed that the amount required—£900,000—should be raised by an issue at par of debentures to be redeemable at par, and bearing interest at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent; that the interest of these debentures, together with a further 1 per cent for sinking fund, should be guaranteed by the British South Africa Company for a period of $50\frac{3}{4}$ years; and that in addition a guarantee of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent required for interest and sinking fund should be given by the Imperial Government. The alternative proposition of Mr Rhodes was, that the Bechuanaland Railway Company should exercise their option to redeem the whole of their existing £2,000,000 of 5 per cent debentures at 5 per cent premium; that a fresh issue of £3,000,000 debentures, bearing interest at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, should be made to provide (1) the £900,000 required for the construction of the new section, and (2) the £2,100,000 required for the redemption of the existing £2,000,000 issue of debentures; that a guarantee of interest at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent and of 1 per cent sinking fund should be given by the British South Africa Company for a period of $50\frac{3}{4}$ years upon the whole of the £3,000,000 issue of debentures; and that in addition a guarantee of interest and sinking fund to the same amount should be given by the Imperial Government.

Of these two schemes, Mr Rhodes considered that the second was preferable to the first, as from a financial point of view it was undesirable that there

should be different classes of debentures, as would be the case if the Government accepted the first scheme. As showing the advantage to the railway company of having the guarantee of the Imperial Government, Mr Rhodes pointed out that while the liability of the railway company for interest at the rate of 5 per cent on its £2,000,000 was £100,000 per annum, under the scheme outlined above the annual liability for interest at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the whole of the £3,000,000 of debentures would only be £75,000, or a clear saving to the railway company, through the use of the imperial credit, of £25,000 per annum, with the addition of 250 miles to its system. With regard to the further information asked for by the Government in its letter of July 28, 1898, regarding the receipts of the line between Vryburg and Bulawayo, its cost of construction, and other particulars, Mr Rhodes enclosed these and also a certified copy of the British South Africa Company's balance-sheet, showing that with the issue of new shares then being made the available cash assets of that Company would be over two millions sterling. This letter of Mr Rhodes closed by saying that "this railway may fairly claim to be an imperial undertaking, and as such it is commended to the favourable consideration of her Majesty's Government."

There was much interest being manifested in this correspondence with the Government about the trans-African railway, but Mr Rhodes preserved a sphinx-like silence, and with the Government equally uncommunicative, the public was compelled to fall

back on conjecture. At the beginning of February Mr Rhodes caused a mild surprise in London by the announcement that he was going to Egypt, for it had been looked upon as a certainty that he would remain in England until the matter with the Government was settled one way or another, and it was thought in some quarters that his thus quitting the country was an indication that he had met with a rebuff at Downing Street. His visit to Cairo, however, was principally to arrange for the transport of the iron poles for the trans-continental telegraph line up the Nile, and to confer with Lord Cromer on the rates to be charged and other details in connection. In the House of Commons the "Liberal Forwards" gave evidence of bitter animosity to Mr Rhodes and his work, and a certain section of the London press also attacked him in vigorous terms; but the numbers of the one were so small, and the influence of the other so exceedingly slight, that this opposition did not affect the issue at all.

On his return to Europe Mr Rhodes halted at Berlin at the beginning of March 1899, where he had an audience with the German Emperor regarding the passage of the trans-continental telegraph and railway lines through German territory. A glance at the map of Africa will show that Rhodesia is separated from the British colony of Uganda by Lake Tanganyika and the boundary line between German East Africa and the Congo Free State, so that the dream of an "all-red" line across Africa is impossible, and the railway

and the telegraph will therefore have to pass through either German or Belgian territory: of these two, Mr Rhodes preferred the former. He therefore approached the German Emperor for permission to lay the lines through German possessions, and was well received by the Kaiser, who has a keen eye for business, and is well endowed with the "imperial instinct." The first interview between these two interesting personages, the German Emperor and Mr Rhodes, took place on March 11, and while what passed thereat is of course a secret, yet the Kaiser is known to have shown himself as being very friendly disposed to the scheme,—an attitude that was reflected by the German Government and the Berlin press; and it was at length announced that the agreement for the carrying of the telegraph wire through German East Africa had been completed, and that the question regarding the railway was still under negotiation.

Mr Rhodes arrived once more in London on March 27, and immediately wrote to the Colonial Office saying that as the adoption of either of his previous proposals seemed to offer certain difficulties, he made the following further proposal: That the Bechuanaland Railway Company's existing debenture issue of £2,000,000 be paid off; that a new issue at par of debentures to the same amount redeemable at par, bearing interest at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent per annum, should be made upon the same security as previously offered; and that, in lieu of a guarantee of interest upon the capital to be raised for the extension, the Imperial Government should guar-

antee the interest upon the above amount, and in addition a sinking fund charge at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The total liability would thus be 3 per cent on £2,000,000, or £60,000 per annum. Under these conditions the British South Africa Company was prepared to give a similar guarantee, and also to deposit for a term of years to be agreed upon the sum of £300,000 in Consols as an insurance against any shortfall in the receipts of the line. Mr Rhodes stated that if the Imperial Government was prepared to accept this, the Bechuanaland Railway Company would construct immediately, at its own risk and without further guarantee, the first section of the line to the north.

On May 1, 1899, the Colonial Secretary wrote to Mr Rhodes with reference to the three proposals he had made to the Government, announcing that the Government was not prepared to accept any of them—a most surprising conclusion. The main objections, as stated by Mr Chamberlain, were as follows: (1) The Government considered that they would incur a certain risk, while no adequate financial advantage would accrue to them under any of the proposals; and (2) there was no provision that the Cape Government would participate in the guarantee, though that Government was greatly interested in the matter, looking at the direct personal advantage which might be expected to accrue to the colony from the traffic that would flow between the north and the sea over its railway system.

While not accepting any of Mr Rhodes's proposals, the Government made a provisional offer in the

following terms: That the Imperial Government should lend the Bechuanaland Railway Company £2,100,000 for the redemption of the existing 5 per cent debentures of the railway at a premium of 5 per cent, the interest for this sum to be at the rate of $2\frac{3}{4}$ per cent with a sinking fund of $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent, for which no guarantee would be required by the British South Africa Company. This arrangement was conditional on the guarantee by the Cape Government to pay for the period of the currency of the loan (sixty years) one-third of any deficiency which might at any time exist in the payment of interest and sinking-fund. The ordinary shareholders of the Bechuanaland Railway Company were to contract that at the expiry of the period of repayment the railway from Vryburg to Bulawayo should become the joint property of her Majesty's Government and the Cape Government on the payment to the shareholders of the sum of £100,000, while the railway company was to deposit the sum of £300,000 in Consols until the extension of the line was completed.

Such conditions as these were, of course, absurd, and could not for a moment be entertained. Mr Rhodes did not want any money from the Imperial Government, and had never asked for it: all he wanted was a collateral guarantee, so as to enable him to raise the money on better terms than he could have done without it. On May 9, therefore, Mr Rhodes replied to the communication from the Colonial Office regretting that the Government had not seen its way to accept any one of his proposals,

as he had been led by the letter of the Colonial Office, dated July 28, 1898, to believe that they considered the matter favourably. With regard to the introduction of the Cape Government into the guarantee, Mr Rhodes said that he did not think that Rhodesia should put itself under an obligation to the Cape Colony by asking for a guarantee with the risk of a refusal, which would place it and the Imperial Government in an absolutely false position. "I am further," Mr Rhodes went on, "in a position to state that the financial objections to the scheme from the point of view of the Bechuanaland Railway Company are vital. The board of that company point out that, under one of the clauses of your proposal, all the profits of the line are to be devoted to its extension or improvement; that for sixty years the shareholders are to get no profits, and that after that time the whole of their rights are to be surrendered for £100,000. As shares representing one-third of the share capital are in the hands of independent shareholders at a present market value of £120,000, they are unable to understand on what grounds her Majesty's Government expect the shareholders to consent to hand over their whole property for £100,000 after sixty years, and to receive no profits in the mean time." It is not often given to a private individual to be in a position to rebuke the Government of a great Power in this manner, nor is it often that a Government needs such a rebuke; for the proposals of the Cabinet were ridiculous to a degree, and demand no further comment than that which Mr Rhodes be-

stowed upon them in the paragraph of his letter quoted above.

With this breaking off of the negotiations Mr Rhodes was not beaten by any means, despite the exultation of his opponents; for, as will be more fully explained later, the financial houses in London interested in Rhodesia immediately came to Mr Rhodes's assistance and offered to provide the money for the extension of the railway northwards. And so in a very short time after the rejection of the proposals of Mr Rhodes by the Imperial Government, the construction of the railway northwards to Gwelo from Bulawayo was commenced.

CHAPTER XVIII.

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN RHODESIA.

SHORTLY after the rejection of Mr Rhodes's proposals by the Imperial Government, an extraordinary meeting of the British South Africa Company was called to enable that gentleman to lay before the shareholders his views as to the future policy and prospects of the Company, and naturally a great portion of his speech dealt with the telegraph and railway schemes. Referring to his recent visit to Egypt, Mr Rhodes said that he had come to an agreement with the Egyptian authorities whereby the charge for messages through their territory was fixed at $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per word; and he further stated that he had signed an agreement with the German Government for the passage of the telegraph wire through their territory for a period of forty years, after which time so much of the line as passed through that territory would become the property of Germany, who would, however, undertake to transmit through messages.

Mr Rhodes then turned to the railway enterprise, dealing first of all with two branch lines which were to be built from Bulawayo. The first of these

was to go to the Gwanda district to the south-east of Bulawayo, and was intended to be extended eventually to the Tuli coalfield. The capital needed for this railway, which would be about 100 miles long, was set down at £300,000, and this had been provided by the mining and other companies holding large interests in the Gwanda district, and for whose benefit chiefly the line was to be built. The other branch railway which it was proposed to construct was to go to the north-west from Bulawayo, to reach an extensive coalfield which had been discovered in the neighbourhood of the Victoria Falls. It was proposed that this line should be a narrow-gauge one, its length to be about 170 miles, while the capital required would be nearly the same as that for the Gwanda line, £300,000. Mr Rhodes announced that there was a group of financiers in the city prepared to raise this capital, without any guarantee from the Chartered Company.

These two branch lines disposed of, Mr Rhodes turned to the trans-continental trunk line. After commenting on the refusal of the Government to give him the guarantee that he sought, Mr Rhodes announced that the directors of the British South Africa Company had, after a great deal of consideration, determined to build the line northwards as far as the limits of their territory—roughly speaking, about 900 miles north of Bulawayo,—but the idea of pushing it forward beyond that towards Egypt must be suspended for a while. It might come in the future, but the directors of the Char-

tered Company had first to look to the development of the country under the administration of the Company. To raise the money for this extension, the directors of the British South Africa Company had been to all the companies owning claims in the country and asked them for financial support for this undertaking, and in response these companies had immediately subscribed nearly half a million sterling at 3 per cent interest, which was sufficient to carry the railway forward for 150 miles or so, to the Globe and Phoenix mine in the Sabakwe district. This meant that about 750 miles of railway would remain to be built before the northern boundary of Rhodesia was reached; and Mr Rhodes explained at length to the meeting how he proposed to raise the capital for this great undertaking.

Briefly his plan was this: The whole of the proposed route to Lake Tanganyika had been traversed, and some idea could be formed as to the probable cost of the line, which was set down as three millions sterling, and this the Bechuanaland Railway Company proposed to raise by means of debentures carrying interest at the rate of 4 per cent with the guarantee of the Chartered Company. The money would not be required all at once, as at the outside only about 200 miles of railway could be built in a year, and therefore the railway company would require the sum of £600,000 a-year for five years. As an additional inducement for persons to subscribe to this issue, it was further proposed to offer to those taking railway debentures an option

for two years to take up a certain proportion of the unissued shares of the British South Africa Company at £5 per share. As security the railway company and the Chartered Company gave guarantees on capital and interest in perpetuity. This meant that a person buying £100 of debenture stock would pay up £20 a-year for five years. For this, he would be receiving interest at the rate of 4 per cent, with ample security for his money. In addition he would for two years have the option of taking up so many shares in the British South Africa Company at £4 premium, and this he would naturally do if the state of the market warranted the step: if not, then he would still be receiving 4 per cent for his money, which was double what he would have got had he deposited it with the Bank of England.

Supposing that the shareholders did not respond to this offer, Mr Rhodes announced that Mr Alfred Beit was prepared to take up half a million sterling of debentures, while he himself would take another £200,000 worth—"I would have taken more," remarked Mr Rhodes parenthetically, "only for the last few years I have devoted myself to politics, and politics and the accumulation of wealth do not go well together,"—and there was a syndicate of Mr Rhodes's City friends prepared to take up a further half million of debentures, so that if the shareholders did not subscribe a shilling, practically half the capital needed was assured. The latter part of Mr Rhodes's remarks was instructive, if only to show how men of business in London, who

do not as a rule allow sentiment to intervene in their transactions, were convinced of the future of Rhodesia and the benefits that the railway would confer on it.

In concluding this speech, Mr Rhodes drew a significant comparison between the position of Rhodesia and that of the Transvaal as regarded raising money. In two months Rhodesia had succeeded in obtaining the sum of ten millions sterling for various purposes, while the Transvaal, though producing gold at the rate of seventeen millions sterling per annum, had been trying in vain for two years to borrow two million pounds. Seeing that it was those interested in Rhodesia who were providing the money for the extension of the railway, Mr Rhodes decided to change the name of the Bechuanaland Railway Company to the one which it now bears, the Rhodesia Railways.

While Mr Rhodes was in England negotiating with the Government about the railway, Rhodesia was in the throes of its first election for members of the newly constituted Legislative Council, which had been formed by the Order in Council promulgated in October 1898, by which it was ordered that two members from Matabeleland and two from Mashonaland were to be elected to represent the settlers in the country on the new Council, with five members of the British South Africa Company. The result of this election showed that Dr Hans Sauer and Mr Hutchinson had been elected for Matabeleland, and Colonel Grey and Mr Grimmer for Mashonaland, while the nominees of the Chartered

Company were Sir Thomas Scanlan, K.C.M.G., Mr Justice Vintcent, and Messrs Castens, Griffin, and Orpen; while the Administrator of Mashonaland (Mr W. H. Milton), the Administrator of Matabeleland (Captain the Hon. A. Lawley), and the Resident Commissioner (Lieutenant-Colonel Sir M. J. Clarke, K.C.M.G.) were members *ex officio*. The first meeting of this Council took place on May 15, 1899, at Salisbury, Mr Milton, as senior Administrator, presiding.

Almost as soon as this Council met, differences began to show themselves between the elected representatives and the nominated members. Exception was at once taken to the presence on the Council of Mr Justice Vintcent, on the ground that one whose duty it was to administer the law should not take any part in the making of the law; and there seemed to be something to say in favour of this contention. But the supporters of the action of the Government pointed to the fact that in this country the highest legal tribunal is the House of Lords; and as it was stated that the judge's appointment was only of a temporary nature, this difficulty was overcome, only, however, to make way for a much more serious one—that of the land tenure question. This dispute arose through the introduction of a “land bill” by Mr Orpen on behalf of the Government, defining the word “occupation” in the title granted to owners of land as meaning actual *bonâ fide* farming and cultivation, with stock, either by the original grantee himself or by an approved substitute. This savoured rather of shutting the gate after the horse had gone, for, as has already been

seen in these pages, huge tracts of land now belonged to companies who kept them practically closed to farmers and settlers. The opposition to this measure, however, arose from another cause than this, it being urged that the Land Bill was an attempt to import into the titles of land grants certain conditions which did not exist. The whole of the elected members were unanimous in their opposition to the bill; but eventually the Government, by means of its majority, carried the measure, which, receiving the approval of the High Commissioner, then became law. When the bill was carried in the Legislative Council the popular representatives retired in a body to mark their disapproval. Ultimately the Chartered Company decided to shelve this measure for a time until the conditions for its enforcement were more opportune.

This vexed question over, another immediately presented itself in its place, this time over the taxation question. Up to the time of the meeting of the Legislative Council direct taxation had been unknown in Rhodesia. The expenditure had been up till then met out of the funds of the British South Africa Company, with the assistance of such sources of revenue as the sale of stamps and other post-office business, mining licences, and suchlike. Now the conditions were changed, and the Chartered Company contended that, as the people had a voice in the government of the country, it was only fair that they should contribute towards the revenue of the country in the shape of direct taxation, and it was therefore proposed to introduce customs

duties on certain classes of goods entering the country. To this course the representatives of the electors on the Council announced themselves as bitterly opposed, and they not unnaturally had behind them almost the whole of the inhabitants of Rhodesia, who, while not unwilling that they should have some voice in the management of the country in which they were living, were averse, apparently, to contributing so largely to the revenue. A good deal of feeling on the matter was manifested on either side. The residents did not deny their liability to pay taxes—that would have been absurd—but they argued that the burdens proposed by the Chartered Company were more than they ought to be expected to bear. The elected representatives, with entire unanimity, held that the proportion of the expenditure to be met by the inhabitants of the country should not be more than one-third of the total, excluding the large sum required for the maintenance of the police force, which, they contended, had been rendered necessary through the acts of certain members of the Chartered Company in the past, and with which the people of Rhodesia had had nothing whatever to do. The total of the estimated expenditure for the current year was £739,713, while the receipts from all sources, including customs, were set down at £381,000, thus leaving a deficit of £358,713 to be provided by the Chartered Company. The expenditure for the police appeared in the estimates at £285,706, and this deducted from the total of the estimated expenditure left £454,007, and it was a third of this sum—

viz., £151,335, 13s. 4d.—that the elected members contended should be the utmost that the inhabitants ought to be called upon to pay.

The Government refused to accept this contention, when the inhabitants thereupon changed their tactics and argued that, adhering to the terms of the Order in Council whereby the Legislative Council was instituted, the Government had no power to impose taxes; and it was stated that the collection of the customs duties would be resisted on that ground.

The real position of the settlers appeared to be this: While recognising the justness of the contention of the Chartered Company that they ought to be taxed, they held that such taxation should be introduced gradually, and not sprung on them all at once, as was being done. They admitted that it was right that they should contribute towards the cost of law and order in the country, but they urged that the British South Africa Company had a far larger stake in the country than the settlers had, and that they, therefore, should bear the larger share of the expenditure. The Chartered Company were, in truth, in a rather awkward position, for they occupied to some extent a dual position: on the one hand, they were a trading company whose primary duty it was to earn dividends for its shareholders; and on the other hand, they were the Government of a large extent of country, and as such were responsible for the revenue and the good administration of the land, together with the welfare of the inhabitants.

As the Company persisted in its intention to

levy these customs — a step, by the way, which was clearly contemplated by the Order in Council, article 47 of which says that no customs duties shall be levied in Rhodesia of a heavier nature than than those charged by the countries within the South African Customs Union—a petition was drawn up and despatched to the High Commissioner at Cape Town, asking for his intervention in the matter, and a copy of this was sent to England to the Colonial Secretary. It was a tactical error on the part of the elected members of the Legislative Council thus to invite the interference of outside authorities. The Chartered Company had shown their willingness to consider the views of the settlers by suspending for a time the land bill after it had become law, and would, no doubt, have listened favourably to the arguments against the imposition of these customs duties ; but this appeal to Sir Alfred Milner stiffened their backs, and made them determined to carry their point in spite of the opposition. The reply of Sir Alfred Milner, moreover, was distinctly unfavourable to the views of the settlers, for he said that “it is unreasonable to suggest that a source of revenue universally employed should not be available in Rhodesia.” This summed up the situation, and gave the people of Rhodesia to understand that they must not look to the imperial authorities for support in this agitation. Despite the threats of a wholesale quitting of the country by the settlers and what not, which were hurled at the head of the British South Africa Company, when it was seen that it was resolutely sticking to its guns

in the matter, the people seemed to have accepted the inevitable very well, and on August 1, 1899, the first customs on goods entering Rhodesia were levied.

So soon as the contest over this question had lost some of its acuteness, things quieted down considerably, and the development of the country went steadily forward; and had it not been for the uneasiness which prevailed throughout South Africa owing to the crisis in the Transvaal, the country would have undoubtedly forged ahead strongly. As it was, if it was not moving forward very rapidly, Rhodesia was certainly not losing ground, and once the Transvaal difficulty is settled the country will speedily make its way to the forefront of the many States forming the British Empire. While this war between the Boers and the Imperial Government has not directly concerned Rhodesia, indirectly it has had a great influence over that country. As these lines are being written, that struggle which it has long been clear to all students of South African affairs must one day occur—the struggle to determine for all time whether the British or the Dutch Boers are to be the predominant race in South Africa—is going forward. The Rhodesian frontiers are threatened by Boer forces, while their railway communication with the south is cut off. But these things are only temporary, and once the war is over Rhodesia will feel to the full the benefit of it. In the end the British forces must prevail, and the corrupt and retrograde rule of the Dutch will be replaced by the constitution of a British

colony or colonies working harmoniously side by side with the other British States of South Africa. This war once over, it can only then be a question of a few years before there is a federation of South African States under the union-jack, spreading from Cape Town northwards to nearly 1000 miles beyond the Zambesi, and another of Mr Rhodes's "dreams" will have been converted into a reality.

The effect of the long-drawn-out dispute between this country and the Transvaal, and the consequent war, has been to depress the Rhodesian shares on the London Stock Exchange very considerably—more so, perhaps, than there has been any justification for, having regard to the amount of work there is going forward in the country, and of course prospective settlers in Rhodesia have been to a certain extent discouraged from entering the country with fighting taking place so close to it. Given an early termination of the war, however, and Rhodesia will commence that bright future which has been so long in coming.

The history of Rhodesia has now been brought down to the outbreak of the war with the Boer republics; but before turning to this, a few words on the future of the country may be included here. That future has over and over again in these pages been declared to be a very bright one, and having regard to all the facts, it seems impossible that it can be otherwise. In the face of great, almost

superhuman, difficulties, the opening up of the mining industry has been steadily pushed forward, and towns and villages have sprung up throughout the land as though by magic. It is but eleven short years since the first pioneers of the British South Africa Company entered the country, and yet there are to-day towns in it—such as Bulawayo, Salisbury, Umtali, and Gwelo—that need not fear comparison with any others in South Africa. Railways and roads have been constructed through trackless wildernesses, while the telegraph wire—that forerunner of civilisation—has been carried to almost the northernmost limits of the territory, and what was the kraal of a savage and bloodthirsty despot seven years ago is to-day a flourishing, modern, well-built town, replete with all the most modern improvements (to use the phraseology of the house-agent). It possesses hotels which would do credit to any provincial city in England, electric light in its houses and on its well-kept streets, and a tramway system is projected. Away in the open country, in what was ten years ago a *terra incognita* to all save a handful of daring explorers, are mines in full working order, and each has collected around it a little hive of British industry. With two fiercely contested wars, the rinderpest, the locusts, difficulty of transport, scarcity of native labour, and the thousand and one other setbacks Rhodesia has had to contend with during its brief existence as a British colony, the country is to-day a monument to all the world, as showing what British pluck, skill, perseverance, and aptitude

for colonising can accomplish when controlled by one master-mind. It is not too much to say that no other European Power could have done in double time what the British settlers in Rhodesia have done in ten years. In spite of tremendous opposition—often of the most unscrupulous nature—in the past to contend against, the country has progressed amazingly; and now that this opposition is daily being disproved and discredited, there seems to be nothing that can prevent those who in the times when the country was practically unknown, and when the outlook for the young colony was the blackest, came to its assistance with either their influence or their purse from quickly reaping the reward for their efforts.

There is one other point to touch upon regarding the future of the country, and that is the continued existence of the British South Africa Company. By the terms of the charter the Company exercises its administrative rights over Rhodesia for a term of twenty-five years from 1889, and the option of the renewal of these rights at the end of that time is left in the hands of the Imperial Government of the day. Will they be renewed? That is a question which both the supporters and the opponents of the British South Africa Company are already asking themselves. It is, of course, difficult to say so far ahead, but the reply at the present moment seems to be unhesitatingly in the affirmative. The work for which the charter was granted can hardly be completed in the fourteen years which remain, for it does not

in the least seem likely that the colony will be able to govern itself at the end of that time. Much may, of course, intervene in fourteen years to change the policy necessary for the Imperial Government to pursue with regard to Rhodesia, but unless the present war in South Africa brings about the federation of the various States in the sub-continent, it would seem almost certain at the present time that the charter must be continued for a further period.

The war in South Africa has naturally altered to some extent the outlook for Rhodesia, as indeed it has altered the outlook for the whole of South Africa. Instead of the sub-continent having in its centre a plague spot—"an arsenal to which every rebel against Great Britain could turn," as Pretoria has been aptly termed—a place where too long this country has permitted the wrong to be upheld, the weak to be oppressed, the British flag to be jeered at almost daily, and the might of the empire to be either ignored or scoffed at, we shall in a few months' time find the whole of South Africa welded into a harmonious whole, with equal rights for all, whether they be of British or of Dutch birth. The helots of Johannesburg will be enfranchised and their right to freedom of action recognised, while the effete oligarchy of President Kruger and his myrmidons will be but a dark recollection of the past, a thing vanished never to return. The new century will open all the brighter in South Africa for the supremacy of Great Britain having been finally

asserted, and for the suppression of the utterly corrupt and vicious Boer Government in the Transvaal; and with fair government under the union-jack from Cape Town to the northernmost limit of Rhodesia, an era of great prosperity must inevitably set in for South Africa, and in this Rhodesia will have its full share.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SIEGE OF KIMBERLEY.

WHEN the war in South Africa broke out it was recognised by all who understood the conditions which prevailed that for a few weeks the Boers, thanks to their great mobility, and being as it were on the spot, must hold the upper hand. This being the case, it was accepted as unavoidable that British territory, in some quarter or another, would be invaded. But it was believed, though this belief was entirely erroneous, that the British garrisons in Cape Colony and Natal would be strong enough to repel the Boer advance into either of these colonies, and that therefore it would be to the north, towards Bulawayo, that the Boers would move, seeing that there were no British troops in Rhodesia.

This, however, has not been the case, and probably for two reasons. Firstly, the opportunity of plunder was far greater in the older colonies, where nearly the whole of the land is under cultivation and horses and cattle are numerous; and secondly, the Boers would infinitely rather fight against the British soldier, who advances in close order and

fight strictly by the book, than they would against men like the settlers in Rhodesia, who would play the Boers' own game, and probably beat them at it. Therefore the Boers overran the northern part of Cape Colony and north-western Natal. Another reason for this movement by the Boers to the south rather than to the north is probably to be found in the fact that among the Afrikaner population the invaders were assured of aid, either covert or open, while in Rhodesia they would have been under very different conditions. Besides, it was realised by the generals of the allied forces that when the British advance commenced, it would be from either Cape Town or Durban, and therefore to have moved to the north would have been to have left the Republics open to the British army.

The negotiations between the British Government and President Kruger, with all their many fluctuations and developments, were followed with the closest interest in Rhodesia; and when it became known that the Bloemfontein Conference was broken off, through the stubbornness of the Transvaal President, there was not a single individual from Tuli to Tanganyika who was not thoroughly convinced that war was inevitable, unless the Home Government was content to abandon the Uitlanders, and to leave Africa to the mercy of Paul Kruger. Diplomacy might have deferred the war—it could not have prevented it.

That being the general belief in Rhodesia, no one in the country was surprised when the Presidents launched their ultimatum, although the action of

the President of the Free State in throwing in his lot with the Transvaal was somewhat unexpected, seeing that the Free Staters had everything to lose and nothing to gain by participation in the war. No one in South Africa attacked the Imperial Government for not sending troops out to Africa sooner, for those on the spot knew perfectly well that if the British troops despatched from India to Natal in September had been sent in June, the war would have commenced three months earlier.

So soon as war was declared, Rhodesia prepared to defend itself from attack. In some quarters, at Bulawayo and Salisbury, disappointment was manifested that the Imperial Government had not sent up troops to aid in guarding the country. Colonel Plumer, who had rendered himself highly popular in Rhodesia by the part he had played in the Matabele rebellion, had, before the outbreak of hostilities, arrived in Bulawayo, and he forthwith commenced to raise a corps of Irregulars to watch the drifts across the Limpopo, and to repel any raiding by the Boers in that direction. Volunteers quickly came forward for this purpose, and there was soon a useful body under Colonel Plumer's command. The armed force available for the defence of Rhodesia, according to the official returns, were—five police troops, comprising a total of all ranks of 714 men, in Mashonaland; and five troops, composed of 570 men, in Matabeleland; or a total police strength of 1284 officers and men. From these, however, had to be deducted a troop which was shut up with Colonel Baden-Powell in Mafeking. In addition to

the police there were three corps of volunteers, stationed respectively at Salisbury, Bulawayo, and Umtali; and by October 31, 1899, there were over 300 volunteers in camp outside Bulawayo equipped for active service. Included in this number were 60 mounted men, a force that would have been increased by 50 mounted police had the occasion required it.

It was soon seen that one of the objects of the Boers was to cut the railway communication between Rhodesia and the south; and to prevent this so far as possible, Colonel Plumer moved down to Tuli to watch the movements of the Boers in the northern portion of the Transvaal. So soon as it was known that Colonel Plumer was about to move, the Rhodesians quickly offered their services, and soon 1500 men—many of them with considerable experience of South African fighting, and all of them of a type which guaranteed them giving a good account of themselves—were in the field. As a further precaution, the Government of Rhodesia distributed about 600 rifles among the workers of the leading mines, so as to enable them to offer some resistance in case their property was attacked by the Boers. This was a good idea, and greatly added to the defensive resources of the country. Each of these mines became, as it were, a small armed camp; and it was estimated that on one of these properties alone, the Geelong, 100 men could have taken the field against the Boers, many of them seasoned campaigners, and nearly all of them good shots and riders.

Taking one force with another, there were between

2000 and 3000 men under arms in Rhodesia of a most useful type.

As the war went forward, however, it was quickly seen that Rhodesia was not destined to be attacked in force, though Colonel Plumer's column had some hot skirmishes with the Boers, which will be referred to more fully later. This being the case, the thoughts of those in the country were turned towards the beleaguered garrisons of Kimberley and Mafeking. On the outbreak of the war Mr Rhodes had taken up his abode in the former town in preference to returning to Cape Town, as he would have been quite justified in doing. This fact alone led to every incident in the siege of Kimberley being followed with eager attention by the people of Rhodesia, who realised how necessary it was for the wellbeing of that country that Mr Rhodes should not fall into the hands of the Boers. With regard to Mafeking, the interest which Rhodesians took in the defence of that town was only very slightly less than that manifested with regard to Kimberley. In the first place, there was in the former town, as has already been mentioned, a troop of the British South Africa Police, most of the members of which had relatives and friends in Rhodesia. Again, it was realised that the defence of the town had been undertaken mainly with a view to protecting the railway line to the north; and, moreover, Colonel Baden-Powell had made many friends in Rhodesia during the course of the rebellion, and his gallant defence of Mafeking was the subject of praise on every hand.

To give detailed descriptions of the events of the

war as it raged round these two frontier towns would be manifestly beyond the scope of this book; but a brief sketch of the salient features of the sieges of Kimberley and Mafeking may well be included, seeing how intimately Rhodesia was concerned in the successful defence of these two towns.

To turn first to Kimberley. At the outbreak of the war it was one of the first towns on which the Boer forces bestowed their attention. Prominent among the reasons for this were the rich diamond mines, which, had they fallen into the hands of the Boers, would have enormously increased the wealth of the Republics. The town, commanding as it does the main railway line between Cape Town and the north, has a strategic importance; and lastly—and this, perhaps, is the strongest reason of all—Cecil Rhodes, the man whom the Boers hate with a hatred that only their sluggish, vindictive, barbarous natures are capable of, was shut up there, and to all appearances they had him in the hollow of their hand. Therefore when news reached this country that on October 14, 1899, the railway line and telegraph wires had been cut to the south of Kimberley, none who had followed the events in South Africa closely were at all surprised. The inhabitants of Kimberley, however, had not been idle, and despite the strong disinclination which the Cape Government manifested to do anything for the frontier towns which might enable them to oppose the Boers, their importunity was at length rewarded by a half battalion of the Lancashire Regiment, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Kekewich, being sent to the town from the

Orange River, together with a handful of the Royal Highlanders.

This small infantry force numbered about 500 men—better than nothing, but not nearly strong enough for the work before them. However, volunteers were plentiful enough in the town; and the De Beers Company, which has the controlling influence in Kimberley, set a good example by arming the whole of their employees, and setting aside a certain portion of each day for purposes of drill and instruction. As soon as rumours reached the town of a strong Free State force being on its way to attack them, everything that was possible was done in the way of defence. Notable features of the topography of Kimberley are the huge “dumps” of earth which has been dug out of the mines and thrown up on the outskirts. Intrenchments and gun-emplacements were made on the summits of these artificial kopjes, while at their bases shelters were hollowed out into which the women and children in the town might be placed out of the way of the Boer shells.

When paraded just before the first attack, the total force available for fighting was, in addition to the 500 men of the Lancashire Regiment mentioned above, a battery of Royal Field Artillery some 70 strong, with six 7-pounders, and about 50 of the Royal Engineers. These were the whole of the Imperial forces in Kimberley during the siege. The volunteer forces consisted of the Kimberley Rifles, 1000 strong; the Diamond Fields Artillery, 70 strong, with six field-guns and a Maxim detach-

ment; and the Diamond Fields Light Horse, comprising about 200 men, all of them skilled riders and good shots. In addition, forming as it were a second line of defence, was the Kimberley Town Guard, composed of practically every able-bodied man in the town who was not a member of one or other of the above-mentioned corps. Its members were only liable to be called upon in moments of stress, whereas all the other corps were under arms at all times. This town guard numbered slightly over 2000 men, thus bringing up the total of the garrison to close upon 4000, all under the command of Colonel Kekewich.

On October 24 the first collision between the garrison and the Boers took place, a sortie being conducted by a force from Kimberley, in order to drive the Boers back from some of their advanced positions. In this movement they were successful, but, unfortunately, the British force available was not strong enough to press its advantage home. The Boers kept gradually increasing their force outside the town, and maintained a desultory bombardment while they gradually pushed their earthworks forward towards the outskirts. After this period of inaction, or comparative inaction, had lasted for some days, the besiegers plucked up courage, and on November 7 commenced a furious artillery-fire on the town, which, however, did but little damage. The guns of the garrison replied to this attack with spirit, and soon the firing died away almost as suddenly as it had begun.

So far as the besieged were able to make out, things about this time seemed to be getting into train for a general assault on the town, and preparations were being made to resist this when the scouts brought in information to the effect that part of the encircling force was trekking to the south. This movement on the part of the Boers was inexplicable to those in Kimberley for some little time, until at length it became known that a strong column under Lord Methuen was moving up along the railway line with the object of relieving the beleaguered town. So soon as the news of British victories at Belmont and Graspan reached it, through the agency of native spies, and it was ascertained that the Boer forces had been much reduced, the garrison proceeded to make things extremely uncomfortable for such of the Boers as remained behind. The slightest movement on the part of the besiegers was the signal for a furious and, generally speaking, an effective cannonade. On the evening of November 25 a strong force was paraded under the command of Major Scott-Turner of the Black Watch, a gallant officer, and one who had made himself extremely popular in the town. The object of this force was a sortie against the main Boer laager; and this being made, some fierce fighting ensued, in the course of which the Britishers lost 5 men killed and about 25 wounded. The Boer loss on this occasion is unknown; but it was probably heavy, as the fighting was at very close quarters for some time.

Encouraged by this success, the garrison deter-

mined on another sortie; and on November 28, when the sound of heavy firing in the direction of the Modder river told that Lord Methuen's force was engaged with the enemy, a strong force collected in the town and sallied forth straight at the chief Boer position. This time the enemy were on the alert, and almost as soon as the British force commenced to move across the open country they were detected by the search-light which the Boers had mounted on their works, a heavy rifle-fire was opened on the advancing force, and several men dropped. The blood of the garrison was aroused, however, and with a defiant cheer Imperials and Colonials vied with each other as to which should be the first to reach the Boer lines and give the enemy a taste of the bayonet. In the words of an eyewitness, the Kimberley volunteers "fought like devils," and in this they were set a good example by the Imperial troops, for the men of the "Loyal North" drove the Boers before them like so many sheep, and the dim light of the stars and the moon overhead glinted on the death-dealing steel of the Lancashire men as they pressed forward and again and again went right through the Boer troops. When at length the work for which the force had been sent out from the town to perform was accomplished and the "recall" was sounded, it was found that 22 of the force had been killed and over 30 wounded. Numbered with the dead was Major Scott-Turner, who had died as all English officers would wish to die, sword in hand and face to face with the foe. The Boers, following their usual

tactics, endeavoured to minimise their loss; but it must, in the face of the desperate character of the fighting, have been very considerable.

After this second sortie there was a lull in the siege, and both sides settled down to recoup themselves after the severe fighting. The garrison took advantage of this lull to strengthen their defences, until the town was looked upon as wellnigh impregnable unless heavy siege-guns firing lyddite or some other high explosive were brought against it. The employees of the De Beers Company, who, although serving as soldiers, were still receiving their pay as workers on the mines, about this time turned their attention to the manufacture of shells for the field-guns, and, after a few experiments, were successful in turning out some very useful missiles. Meanwhile Mr Rhodes spent such of his time as his share in the defence of the town left him in laying out a new street and planting it with trees; and soon he had formed a very handsome thoroughfare, on which he bestowed the appropriate name of "Siege Avenue."

- On December 4 the inhabitants of Kimberley were delighted to see a British flash-light working from the ridges near the Modder river, which were then held by General Methuen's force, and by means of a similar search-light rigged up in Kimberley, the dwellers in the besieged town were able to maintain some slight communication with the outer world. Hope of a speedy relief now ran high in Kimberley, for General Methuen had gained three victories over the Boers, each, however, after

very severe fighting; and while it was seen that the relief force would have to fight another hard battle, either at Magersfontein or at Spytfontein, there was but little doubt in the town that the British force would emerge victorious. These hopes were doomed to disappointment. The result of the engagement at Magersfontein—a name which will for many years to come rankle in the breasts of the Highland regiments—was to check the advance of the British force and send Lord Methuen back to the Modder river, where he intrenched himself and settled down for a long period of inactivity.

As the dream of speedy relief vanished from the minds of those in Kimberley, lips were clenched a trifle tighter, and the determination to hold out for as long as was humanly possible was intensified. The available stores in the town were overhauled. Every one was put on strict rations, with the object of husbanding the supplies as much as possible. The garrison then settled down to await the next move on the part of the Boers. The besiegers, however, were chary of attempting to “rush” the town. Such a mode of fighting is foreign to Boer tactics, and all that was done was to maintain an intermittent artillery-fire, as many as a hundred shells being thrown into the town on a single day—with but remarkably little effect, however, for a considerable proportion of them failed to burst. Nor were the British guns silent at this time, for so soon as the positions of the Boer guns were located, a hot fire was concentrated upon them until they were either silenced or forced to retire. The

courage of those in the town was as indomitable as ever, and the idea of surrender never entered their minds; while the offers of large sums by President Kruger for Mr Rhodes, dead or alive, served to provide them with a constant fund of amusement.

When the news reached the town that the plan of campaign had been somewhat modified, and that Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener were on their way to Cape Town with strong reinforcements, things began to look rather brighter than they had been for a short time previously; and not even the news of British checks in Cape Colony and Natal, or the fact that typhoid and scurvy were making their presence felt among the besieged, served to damp their spirits.

As Christmas approached the inhabitants of Kimberley prepared to celebrate the occasion in as festive a manner as the means at their disposal would permit, and Mr Rhodes came forward with a donation of nearly fifty plum-puddings, which had been cooked in the sanitarium while a brisk bombardment was proceeding. The relaxations, however, were not permitted to interfere with the vigilance of the garrison, and every movement of the enemy was closely scanned.

After a period of almost entire inaction a small sortie was made by the garrison on January 9, with the object of ascertaining the real disposition of the Boer forces, and in this the force was successful: there were no casualties on either side. On January 17 the enemy opened a hot artillery-fire on the town, and the entire force within Kimberley at once

stood to arms, expecting that this firing was but a prelude to the long-looked-for assault. The Boer fire, which lasted about the whole of the day, was chiefly directed towards the redoubts and earthworks of the defenders, and these were in places rather severely damaged. The casualties among the garrison, however, were only slight.

Stimulated by their success in the manufacture of shells, the workmen of the De Beers Company now turned their attention to a more ambitious design—the construction of a heavy siege-gun; and, despite the difficulties attending such a scheme, in the end they turned out a very creditable weapon, which they jocularly christened “Long Cecil.” This weapon was not long before it proved its utility, Mr Rhodes himself firing some of the shells from it. Had it not been for the De Beers Company, indeed, the defence of Kimberley would have provided very different and less cheerful reading. When it was seen that war was inevitable, and Mr Schreiner declined to arm the frontier towns or to sanction their putting themselves into any posture of defence,—the Premier of Cape Colony apparently thinking that he had done all that was necessary when he permitted arms and ammunition to be conveyed over the Cape Government railways for the use of the burghers in the Free State and the Transvaal,—De Beers, on their own initiative, and in defiance of the Cape Ministry, proceeded to accumulate at the Kimberley mines large stores of food-stuffs, arms, and ammunition, so that when the siege began there were these reserves to fall back upon. There can

never be any justification for the part played by certain members of this company in encouraging and stimulating the Jameson raid; but at least these efforts, which tended so largely to the successful defence of Kimberley, deserve to be set off against their former criminality.

The Boers had by this time massed their forces in an irregular semicircle running from the south of Kimberley to the east, and extending through the villages of Wimbledon, Alexandersfontein, and Olifantsfontein, while there was another strong commando on the north and north-west of Kimberley around Kampersfontein and Otto's kopje; and on January 23 the fiercest and most prolonged bombardment the town was destined to be subjected to was commenced from each of these centres. There were, however, no casualties, the majority of the shells passing over the town and dropping harmlessly on to the "floors" of the mines.

Early on the morning of January 24 Colonel Peakman collected a mounted force with some guns, and made a demonstration through Beaconsfield to the east of Kimberley,—threatening to pass between the Boer forces at Olifantsfontein and Alexandersfontein, and so to enter the Free State. As soon as the object of this force was understood by the enemy, they commenced a hot rifle-fire on the column, and Colonel Peakman was forced to abandon his design and seek shelter at Rooifontein. Here the force intrenched itself, and replied to the Boer fire under almost complete shelter. The column returned to Kimberley in the evening with-

out having one of their number either killed or wounded. In fact, the whole day's operations on the part of the enemy had been singularly ineffective, the only case to trouble the doctors being that of a trooper who fell off one of the guns in a fit. On the morning of January 25 the bombardment was again commenced, the Boers seeming bent on reducing the town before help from Lord Methuen could get through. The inhabitants, however, retreated to their bomb-proof shelters, with the exception of those actually needed for the defence of the town, and were there safe from the shells which were flying over their heads.

On January 26 it was seen that the bombardment was now being chiefly directed towards the undefended portions of the town where the hospital and women's laagers were situated, and unfortunately, as a result of this, two women and two children were killed. It was computed that in the four days from January 23 over a thousand shells were thrown into the town, but the damage done either to property or life was very slight. In fact, it was a little later announced that up to January 31 only twelve of the garrison had been killed as a result of the Boer shells.

Another lull now took place, and Mr Rhodes's avenue being completed, he found an outlet for his superabundant energy in arranging for the laying out of a new suburb, while he set a large staff of natives to clear a site for the erection of a column in commemoration of the siege. A large dam was also made at Dorsfontein, to remedy, so far as was

possible, the lack of water for the cattle in the town, caused by the Boers having cut off the main water-supply from near Kampersfontein at the beginning of the siege. The garrison enjoyed a plentiful supply of water from the mines, which were independent of the town supply.

As General Roberts matured his plans at Cape Town, the Boer generals seemed to realise that one of the earliest features of the new campaign would be the relief, or attempted relief, of Kimberley, and they redoubled their efforts to reduce the town before Lord Roberts could move. On February 7 it was signalled by search-light from Kimberley to the Modder river that the Boer forces round the town were being greatly increased, and that the enemy were pushing their trenches towards the Premier mine on the outskirts of the town. This could not be regarded without misgiving even by the most courageous among the garrison. The siege had been in progress for nearly four months now, and the continued confinement, coupled with the fact that certain food-stuffs were beginning to get scarce, could not fail to have a bad effect on the health and spirits of those in Kimberley. Fever, dysentery, and scurvy were on the increase. However, there was nothing for it but to hold on for as long as possible, and then to die fighting; so the redoubts and intrenchments were manned, guns shotted, bayonets fixed, and the Boer attacks awaited with composure. They were not kept waiting long, and for some days from February 10 an intermittent fire was maintained, and this gradu-

ally increased in strength until February 12, when all the non-combatants were conveyed to places of safety while the British guns attempted to keep down the enemy's cannonade. This bombardment, like those which had preceded it, died away without doing much damage, and was only resumed spasmodically.

Things were now rapidly shaping themselves for a climax, and on February 14 some hurried movements were noted by the garrison among the different Boer laagers. It was conjectured that news of some kind or another had been received, and those in Kimberley were on the tiptoe of expectation as to what the nature of this intelligence might be. Was it good or bad? Had Lord Roberts commenced his march, or had Ladysmith fallen? The beleaguered town then tried in vain to get a reply to their flash-light signals from the Modder river. General Methuen's camp was as silent as the grave, and gave Kimberley no sign of their presence.

Thus the day of February 14 wore away and the morrow dawned. The first thing that those on the look-out in Kimberley noted was that the Boer forces seemed to have been greatly reduced; and shells were fired by the guns from the town without eliciting any response, the besiegers only breaking their silence by occasional outbursts of rifle-firing. Clearly this betokened something, and it puzzled the wits of the garrison to understand what it was that was portended.

Suddenly, as the afternoon was at its height, there came a sound of heavy firing, both of rifles and of big guns, from round about Alexandersfontein, and the anxiety in Kimberley was greatly intensified. A few hours of this heavy firing and then a cloud of dust was seen sweeping over the plain from the east and rapidly approaching Kimberley, and out of this large bodies of horsemen could be seen emerging. As though by instinct the besieged town seemed to realise that this was the long-expected relief force, though it came upon them like a bolt from the blue. Colonel Kekewich and those with him, however, were not to be led away by appearances, for they knew the cunning nature of their foe, and this might be nothing but an elaborate ruse on the part of the Boers to gain access to the town. The advancing force was therefore signalled and asked who they were, and the reply came back, "General French with relief force." This seemed good news, but still the defenders of Kimberley were not satisfied. The appearance of the force was too sudden and unlooked-for, and it was not until further communications had passed between the town and the force that doubts were removed. General French and his force of cavalry entered the town amid a scene which it is safe to believe has up to the present had no parallel in South Africa. To say that the town went mad with excitement would be a mild way of stating the case; but the relief force had such a welcome as none who were present will forget as long as they live.

The siege of Kimberley was at an end, and Mr Rhodes was not in Paul Kruger's clutches. The total losses during the siege were 2 officers and 29 men killed, and 13 officers and 95 men wounded, while 4 men subsequently died of their wounds, and 1 officer was reported as "missing."

CHAPTER XX.

EVENTS AT MAFEKING.

WHEN the Imperial authorities in South Africa became conscious of the systematic preparations for war which were being made by the two Boer Republics, they took such steps as seemed necessary to prevent the invasion of British territory. That these preparations were insufficient to keep the burghers on their own land was not their fault: they did the best they could with the material at their disposal. With the idea of defending the long stretch of Bechuanaaland frontier to the west of the Transvaal, and, if possible, of preventing the Boers seizing the railway line, it was decided to garrison Mafeking with colonial troops under the command of Colonel R. S. S. Baden-Powell—a happy choice.

Colonel Baden-Powell has the reputation of being the finest scout in the British army, and the task which he had performed in quelling the Matabele rebellion added greatly to this reputation. Further, he had a long experience of South African warfare to recommend him, and his cheery good-humour and great personal courage served to make him an almost

ideal commander for colonial irregulars shut up in an unfortified frontier town. When leaving England for South Africa in the early summer of 1899, before the outbreak of the war, but at the time when its possibility was foreseen, Colonel Baden-Powell expressed a wish that if hostilities should commence the War Office would find him "a nice warm corner," and he has not been disappointed in this respect. The forces under his command in Mafeking included the Bechuanaland Protectorate Regiment, the Bechuanaland Rifles, a squadron of the British South Africa Police, and a half battery of the Kimberley Artillery Volunteers; while there were several unattached Imperial officers in the town who proved of inestimable value as the siege proceeded.

Two days after the despatch of the Boer ultimatum a Transvaal force entered Bechuanaland about forty miles to the south of Mafeking, and at once commenced to wreck the railway and telegraph lines. So soon as news of this reached the town, Lieutenant Nesbit was despatched with an armoured train to try to beat back the Boers, and keep open the communication with the south. Unfortunately, the enemy had foreseen the probability of an attack by an armoured train, and had taken precautions against it. They loosened some of the rails without removing them, so that when the engine ran on to them it would be at once thrown over; and this done, they retired to a place of ambush. There they waited until the train had overturned and the inmates were entangled in the wreckage, when they poured a withering fire into the now defenceless

party, who returned it as well as they were able. The struggle was too unequal to last long. The Boers were almost completely hidden from those in the train, many of whom had been injured by the engine running off the metals, while the remainder of the party offered a splendid target for the Boer bullets, so that before long the Britishers were compelled to surrender, and so enable the Boers to congratulate themselves on having gained the first success of the campaign,—a fact which, unfortunately, served to confirm the belief already held by many of the burghers, that they were bound to have an easy and complete triumph over the much-despised *rooivlees*.

Perceiving that an attack on Mafeking was probable, and to be ready for emergencies, Colonel Baden-Powell quickly set about protecting the town by every means in his power. Across the entrances to Mafeking empty waggons were drawn up in lines with the idea of minimising the power of the enemy's shells as much as possible, and at the same time of affording a post of vantage to the defenders should the Boers try to carry the town by assault. In addition to these waggons, breastworks composed of sandbags, and carefully planned earthworks, were constructed, while all exterior walls fronting positions where an attack was most likely to be expected were carefully loopholed for rifle and machine-gun fire. The country round about Mafeking is for the greater part flat and devoid of cover, with the exception of one or two kopjes near the town, which were promptly fortified and manned by the garrison,

while for some distance on each side of the town the veldt was carefully mined,—a fact which Colonel Baden-Powell took good care should reach the ears of the Boers, who have a great dread of these subterranean mines. Within the town itself the inhabitants, as was the case at Kimberley, took care to excavate bomb-proof shelters to which they could retire out of the reach of the Boer shells.

It was not long before Mafeking was attacked. On the 14th October a Boer force appeared before the town and opened fire. The garrison at once responded with spirit, and a sharp engagement ensued, which ultimately resulted in the attacking force being beaten off and forced to retire out of the range of the garrison's field-guns. Here the Boers rallied and set about forming a laager. For a day or two the besieging force was content to complete its preparations for a long siege without paying much attention to the town, and to wait for the arrival of General Piet Cronje, who was hastening up, eager to reduce the garrison, and so gain the first great success of the war,—for the news of the British victories at Glencoe and Dundee had not at that time penetrated to the western border.

General Cronje for twenty years or so had hated the British with a fierce vindictive hatred which nothing could remove, and was eager to meet them once more in the field. Seeing that the garrison was determined, and realising that a proposal to attempt to "rush" the town across the open veldt would create something like a mutiny in his camp (for the average Boer fighting-man has an intense

dislike to showing himself in the open for his foes to fire at from behind shelter), General Cronje decided to fall back on the same tactics which he had adopted with so much success at the siege of Potchefstroom in 1881, and to push trenches forward towards the town, where he might conceal his men and yet enable them to maintain a severe rifle-fire.

The defenders of Mafeking watched the Boers commence to push forward trenches, and at once turned their attention to preventing this as much as possible by means of artillery-fire, for as yet the besiegers were outside the range of the rifles. The Boers persevered with their earthworks, however; so on the night of October 25 it was decided to deliver an assault on the most advanced position. With that end in view a squadron of the Protectorate Regiment was sent forward under Captain Fitzclarence to drive the Boers from the trench. The commander's orders were precise: the party was not to fire a shot, depending on their bayonets to do the work. Silently this little force stole out into the night, and were soon lost to the view of those remaining in the town, where the whole garrison was standing under arms prepared to go to their comrades' assistance if required. After what seemed an age to those in the town the stillness of the night was broken by a shrill whistle, Captain Fitzclarence's signal for his men to charge. So soon as this was heard there was a cry from the Boers in the trench nearest the town; but this was drowned by a defiant British cheer, which was answered by a yet louder one from Mafeking. Gallantly led by Captain

Fitzclarence, the Colonials, about fifty strong, sprang into the trench and were driving their bayonets home before the Boers quite realised what was going forward. As the enemy were aroused from their sleep, the sight of the thirsty steel glinting in the moonlight drove terror to their hearts, and many dropped on to their knees and pleaded in piteous terms for mercy,—that mercy which they had denied to the women and children of the refugees fleeing from Johannesburg. The Boers in the other trenches, alarmed by the struggle which was going forward, and of which they could only gain a hazy account, commenced a hot rifle-fire, ignoring the fact that by so doing they were in danger of wounding or slaying their own comrades.

After a time Captain Fitzclarence's whistle was again heard above the commotion, and, acting on their orders, the British force at once sprang from the trench and prepared to return to the town as silently as they had come, separating as much as possible so as to lessen the risk of their being hit by the bullets which were falling around them. For some time after they had quitted the trench they could hear the Boers firing and shouting in their confusion, and unaware of the fact that their assailants had retired. The British losses during this attack were six men killed, and eleven wounded, all of whom were conveyed back to the town by their comrades. In addition, one man was reported missing. The Boer loss was not known precisely, but was estimated at about fifty killed and wounded.

It took the enemy some little time to rally themselves ; but after Cronje had summoned Baden-Powell to surrender, "and so avoid further bloodshed,"—a demand which the garrison received with a smile,—a hot bombardment of the town was commenced by some heavy guns which by this time had been got into position. The commencement of this bombardment was on October 31, the Boers first of all concentrating their fire on a detached hill known as Cannon Kopje, which was garrisoned by a squadron of the Protectorate Regiment under Colonel Walford. After the artillery-fire had been maintained on this position for about two hours, the main body of the enemy skirmished forward across the open veldt and attacked the kopje on three sides. Colonel Baden-Powell took prompt steps to render those on the kopje every assistance possible, and with that idea turned all the artillery that he could spare from the other parts of the town on to the advancing Boers, and so drew some of the Boer fire from Colonel Walford's men, who were fighting with great coolness and repelling the enemy's attempts to get to close quarters. The fight raged fiercely round this kopje for some hours ; for, could the Boers have captured it, they would have been able to speedily reduce the town by mounting their big guns on the summit, and Cronje realised this just as much as Baden-Powell did. In the end the Boers were beaten off, and after five hours' fierce fighting they withdrew to their trenches, raked by a murderous fire from the British rifles and machine-guns as they did so. This was the

hottest day's work the garrison had so far been called upon to perform, and they had acquitted themselves with great credit, seeing that none save the officers were trained soldiers in the accepted sense of the word. The losses of the garrison must be considered slight in the face of the desperate nature of the fighting. They were two officers and four men killed and five men wounded. The Boer losses were very heavy—two of their waggons being occupied for nearly the whole of the day in searching the veldt for the killed and wounded.

After this repulse the Boers settled down to push their trenches forward, and seemed to relinquish their hopes of carrying the town by assault. About this time Cronje prepared to retire from the command at Mafeking, as he saw no immediate chance of capturing the town, and his presence was needed elsewhere. Before he left, however, Baden-Powell played a trick on him which excited his strong resentment. There was a large quantity of dynamite in the town which the garrison feared might be exploded by a chance shot, and so to avoid this it was decided to load the explosive into two railway trucks and send it some distance down the line, in the hope that the Boers might be tempted to open fire upon it. The ruse acted perfectly. So soon as the enemy perceived two trucks apparently running away down the line, they attacked them with their rifles in the hope of hitting any persons there might be inside. One of their bullets exploded the whole

of the cargo with disastrous effects, many Boers being killed, while others were hurled through the air like so many stones from catapults. It served its purpose, however, by making the Boers very wary of approaching the town.

After the withdrawal of Cronje and the consequent weakening of the Boer forces, those remaining behind proceeded to advance their earthworks nearer to the town and to draw the cordon tighter: to prevent this the defenders commenced counter-sapping about the middle of November. By means of these new earthworks Colonel Baden-Powell's force was able to command the Boer trenches, and to make things very unpleasant for those working in them. In retaliation for this, and to demolish the works if possible, a daily shelling of the town and earthworks was now commenced by the enemy; but as the inhabitants retired to the bomb-proof shelters which had been formed, the casualties were not very severe. About this time Lady Sarah Wilson, the aunt of the Duke of Marlborough, and the only lady war-correspondent in the campaign, was taken prisoner by the Boers, and afterwards exchanged for a Dutch criminal, Viljoen, who up to that time had been imprisoned in the town.

On December 10 Colonel Baden-Powell issued a letter addressed to "The Burghers under arms around Mafeking." In the course of this document the Colonel pointed out to the Boers the causes of the war, and the great resources of the empire against which they had taken up arms. This done, he warned them to return to their homes at once after

laying down their arms and to take no further part in the war, otherwise they could not hope to preserve their homesteads when the British advance through the Free State and the Transvaal commenced. General Snyman, then in command of the Boer forces outside the town, was greatly incensed with this letter from the British commandant, especially with the paragraph which stated that "Mafeking would never be taken by sitting down and looking at it." So annoyed was the Boer general, indeed, that he returned a very heated reply to Baden-Powell, whom he challenged to come out of the town and attempt to drive the burghers away,—a challenge which the British garrison were well content to pass by without retort.

An intermittent bombardment of the town then proceeded, mainly from the small forts which the Boers had thrown up, the chief of which was situated at Game Tree, about two miles from the town. So annoying to the defenders was the fire from this position that it was decided to make a sortie against it. On the early dawn of Boxing-day, therefore, the garrison stood to arms, and a strong force was detailed for the work. This force was made up of two squadrons of the Protectorate Regiment under Captains Fitzclarence and Vernon, one squadron of the Bechuanaland Rifles under Captain Cowen, and three guns. An armoured train also was manned by a detachment of the British South Africa Police under Captain Williams, with a Maxim and a Hotchkiss. Unfortunately the assault failed, and what added to the bitterness of the British repulse was the

obvious fact that there was a traitor in the town who had divulged the scheme of the attack to the Boers, and so enabled them to take precautions to repel it. The fighting was commenced at daybreak, when the British guns opened fire on the forts, while the train moved off down the line so as to bring its occupants within range of the enemy's position. The Boer guns quickly responded to ours, and as the British riflemen moved forward into action, it became evident that the Boers occupied the fort in much greater numbers than had hitherto been the case. Nothing daunted by this discovery, however, the men rushed gallantly forward, led by Captain Vernon, and though the Boer fire was terrible, got to within 300 yards of the fort. Here they were forced to halt. The space between them and the fort was totally destitute of cover, and the bullets were falling on it like hail.

Brave and courageous to the point of recklessness, Captain Vernon and his brother officers made a dash across this space, followed closely by their men, many of whom fell victims to the Boer marksmanship. Clearly the position was impregnable to assault without a sufficient force of artillery to prepare the way. Not even the desperate courage of Captain Vernon and Lieutenant Paton, who actually reached the walls of the fort and fired through the loopholes with their revolvers at the enemy within, could avail. Reluctantly the force fell back to the armoured train, while the failure of the attack was reported to Colonel Baden-Powell, who after consideration decided to recall his men and to sacrifice no more lives in

attempting to carry the fort at the bayonet-point. The storming party thereupon returned to Mafeking, and a short armistice was agreed upon. The ambulances were then sent out to bring in the wounded and the killed, most of whom were found close up to the walls of the fort and on every side of it. The British losses were heavy, being three officers and eighteen men killed, and one officer and twenty-seven men wounded, while three men were taken prisoners, and four more subsequently died of their wounds. The Boer losses were not known, but were probably not so heavy as those sustained by the British, seeing that they had the advantage of fighting under cover the whole time.

After the engagement the enemy admitted having been warned that the attack was about to take place, and as a consequence had been strongly reinforced, while their big guns had been removed farther to the rear into positions of great security. Had Colonel Baden-Powell been able to surprise the position, as he had aimed at doing, there seems to be small doubt but that the assault would have succeeded.

For some time after this attack the Boers refrained from doing anything more than throw a few casual shells into the town, and these did but little damage, thanks to the timely warnings which those on the look-out gave by means of alarm-bells whenever the smoke from the enemy's guns told that a shell had been fired. Sundays were by mutual agreement strictly observed as days of truce in the early days of the siege.

Christmas in Mafeking was celebrated as joyfully

as possible, a children's party being held in the women's laager on the afternoon of Christmas Day, where a huge Christmas tree was erected for the little ones. The result of the action on the following morning threw a gloom over the town and curtailed the remaining festivities.

The effects of the siege were now commencing to be felt by those shut up in Mafeking, and the constant strain on the nerves occasioned by the falling of the Boer shells, together with the close confinement, tended to affect the health of those in the town. Colonel Baden-Powell and his officers, however, maintained a cheerful front, and by the gaiety of their spirits managed to invigorate the others, and all were prepared to hold out "until the place became a cemetery," as the commander put it in one of his despatches. The provisions in the town were ample for many months to come, and there was a good supply of ammunition at hand for both the field-guns and the rifles, so that there was no thought of yielding, and considerable ground for the message which Colonel Baden-Powell forwarded to Lord Roberts, to the effect that there was no particular hurry for the relief force, as he was detaining outside the town a strong force of Boers who might do more damage elsewhere. This humorous message is strongly characteristic of Colonel Baden-Powell.

Unfortunately about this time the Boers took to deliberately firing on the hospital and the women's laager, though these buildings were protected by the Red Cross, and the Boers were expressly warned of where their shells were falling. Despite the

repeated protests of Colonel Baden-Powell, the enemy continued to bombard these buildings at intervals for some weeks, until the British commander at length found a sure way of protecting the wounded and the non-combatants by placing such of the Boer prisoners as he had captured in these buildings. He informed General Snyman of what he had done, and from that time the enemy was more careful in his observance of the usages of civilised warfare.

On January 6 the garrison managed to mount an old muzzle-loading naval gun which was found lying by in the town, together with a quantity of spherical shot; and this weapon proved of service in helping to keep down the fire of the large gun which the Boers had got into position, and whose shells proved very troublesome. An artillery duel was started early on the morning of this day, and continued until night-fall—a Nordenfeldt and other small guns being brought to bear on the enemy's big gun, which in the end was temporarily disabled. The weapon was quickly repaired, however, and for some days this artillery fire went on, no particular damage being done by either side; but inasmuch as the Boer fire was diverted from the town towards the redoubts where the British guns were posted, the defenders of the town were quite satisfied with the result. Despite the constant coming and going which the garrison noted among the besieging force, a sufficient force always remained outside the town to prevent the British getting the upper hand, and on January 10 it was estimated that there were 2000 Boers investing the town.

The enemy apparently had now given up any intentions which they might at one time have had of taking the town by assault, and seemed quite content to try and starve the garrison into submission. The shells from their guns were a source of danger and annoyance to the garrison, and this was the worst thing from which those in the town suffered. It was against these guns, therefore, that the garrison was chiefly employed. Picked shots were sent forward into the trenches to fire at the Boer gunners through the embrasures of the guns, and by these means they were able in the end to cause the withdrawal of the guns farther from the town into a place of greater safety.

From January 15 until the end of February the siege proceeded with great monotony, the only event of interest being the discovery made by the garrison that some of the besiegers were trekking to the north, apparently in the hope of intercepting Colonel Plumer, and so preventing him reaching Mafeking with his relief force. The numbers outside the town, however, were still too great to permit of the garrison adopting offensive tactics with any real prospect of success. The casualties in Mafeking from the beginning of the siege up to February 24, as they were then known in London, were 5 officers and 59 men killed, and 8 officers and 126 men wounded; while 4 men had died of their wounds, and 34 men were reported as missing.

To turn now to Colonel Plumer's force, which was operating along the southern border of Rhodesia, with the object of repelling Boer invasion in that

direction. The base of this force was established at Tuli. Its first move was to watch the "drifts" across the Limpopo, and the first collision between the Rhodesian force and the Boers occurred at Rhodes' Drift, about forty miles directly to the south of Tuli. This skirmish resulted successfully for the British force, inasmuch as the burghers were compelled to keep on their own side of the river. The losses on either side were slight.

As at first organised, Colonel Plumer's force was intended solely to protect Rhodesia; but when it became evident that the Boer plan of campaign did not include any attack in force on Rhodesia, this intention was considerably modified, and Colonel Plumer equipped his force with the object of making an attempt to relieve Mafeking. The difficulties in the way of the successful accomplishment of this attempt were many. To reach Mafeking would entail the force cutting itself off from its base—always a dangerous expedient, and one discountenanced by military theorists. In addition to this, the railway line on which the force might otherwise have relied had been torn up for some miles, and the column would therefore be dependent on horse transport; and lastly, there was known to be a strong body of the enemy between the column and Mafeking. As a set-off against these drawbacks, there was the fact that the column was made up of sturdy colonial fighting men, used to guerilla warfare in South Africa, and inured to living on the open veldt and to providing for themselves; so that what to an elaborately equipped army, accustomed to rely on its officers to

see them through, would have been a very risky proceeding, was to these hardy irregulars an effort little out of their ordinary existence.

Before, however, the relief column could set off some severe fighting took place around Tuli, in which Colonel Plumer's men, though numerically inferior, fully held their own, and demonstrated that they were quite competent to fight the Boers by their own methods. The chief of these skirmishes was that which occurred at Bryce's store in the early part of November. In this affair, thanks in some measure to the treacherous use made by the Boers of a flag of truce, the enemy were successful. A detachment of Colonel Plumer's force had halted at the store on their return from a reconnaissance to rest their horses, and had not been there long when they perceived what seemed to be a sham fight proceeding between two bodies of Boers on some hills a short distance away. The colonists, seeing that they were outnumbered, prepared to fall back on Tuli, when they were surprised to see one of the Boer forces advancing at a gallop towards them with a white flag conspicuously displayed. This party was about fifty strong, and rode quickly forward to where the colonists had halted until they were within about 200 yards of the store, when they deliberately poured a volley into the astonished Britishers, who made a hurried rush towards the store so soon as their hostile intentions were seen. As they entered and prepared to defend the building, the Boers who had remained on the hills commenced to shell the store, carry-

ing away the roof. It quickly became evident that the place was untenable, and after a sharp fight the Rhodesians prepared to make a dash for Tuli, leaving their waggons and some of their mules and horses in the hands of the Boers. Three of the patrol who were wounded, and four others who had not heard the order to withdraw, were left behind and taken prisoners by the Boers, who, despite the use they made of the white flag, treated the men with kindness.

Fighting of a more or less desultory character continued around Tuli for some time until about the beginning of 1900, when Colonel Plumer's preparations for his advance to the relief of Mafeking were complete, and the force moved southwards down the railway line towards Mochudi and Gaberones. The line so far had been relaid, and therefore the force was able to be escorted by an armoured train under Captain Llewellyn of the British South Africa Police. The column moved forward without resistance until the neighbourhood of Gaberones was reached, when the scouts reported that the Boers had taken up a strong position at Crocodile Pools, and were directly in front of the column's line of march. A reconnaissance of the enemy's position was thereupon made, and their laager was found to be heavily entrenched; so that for Colonel Plumer to attack it with the force at his command would have been to court disaster. He preferred, therefore, to defend the position which he had already gained, and to mature his plans before pushing forward. By January 20 he had

managed to get into communication with Mafeking by means of native runners, and was thus able to transmit to Colonel Baden-Powell information as to the enemy's disposition in this part of the country which could not fail to be useful. Three days after this a reconnaissance in force of the Boer position was made by Major Bird, accompanied by four squadrons of the force. This patrol soon came into action, making a bayonet charge up the slope of one of the hills against a party of Boers, who hastily fell back without waiting to come to close quarters. The object of the reconnaissance gained, the party fell back on the main column with much useful intelligence, being shelled by a 9-pounder as they retired.

The next event of interest was an artillery duel, which commenced on the afternoon of January 31, between the British guns and a small fort, which was rather severely handled. This duel continued at intervals until February 2, when Major Bird, accompanied by 150 men, made a demonstration on the right flank of the enemy's position. A sharp infantry action then took place, the Boers being strongly posted on a ridge commanding the road to Mafeking, which passed through the hills by means of a nek or pass. The result of this skirmish was indecisive, both forces holding their ground with great tenacity, and when the fighting ceased neither side could claim the advantage.

Seeing that the enemy was in such strength, Colonel Plumer determined on a night attack, as

being less costly than any other movement he could adopt; so on February 12 Major Bird moved forward with a strong force against the Boer position at Crocodile Pools. The laager at this spot was situated in a naturally strong position on the top of a rocky kopje, and was further defended by means of earthworks which had been thrown up wherever possible, while the sides of the hill were protected by the closely growing thorn-bushes which grew around in profusion. The attacking force reached the foot of this kopje without the alarm being given; but in climbing the slope some of the boulders which were strewn about were displaced, the noise waking the Boer watchdogs which were kept in the trenches, and these animals by their barking effectually aroused the enemy, who immediately poured a heavy rifle-fire into the advancing ranks of the British. Despite the fire and the steepness of the ascent, Major Bird and his men rushed forward; but before they could get near enough to use their bayonets several dynamite mines were exploded under them, and this fact, coupled with the heavy fire they were under, caused Major Bird to withdraw his force and report the state of affairs to Colonel Plumer, as it was clear that the place was impregnable to assault save by vastly superior forces to those at his disposal. Having examined the position for himself, Colonel Plumer decided that to attempt to carry it with the bayonet would mean the sacrifice of more lives than he could afford to lose; so the force returned to its old quarters at Gaberones, and there

awaited such developments as should enable them to strike at the enemy with a greater chance of success.

It soon became obvious to all that Colonel Plumer's force was not nearly strong enough to relieve the beleaguered town without aid from the south. Many rumours were rife in London as to Lord Roberts' intentions—for none believed for a moment that the town would be allowed to capitulate after the gallant manner in which it had held out. Many were the leaders that were selected in England as likely to go to the aid of Mafeking. At one time Lord Methuen's force was said to be moving up the railway line from Kimberley to Mafeking. When this was seen to be incorrect it was announced that the real objective of Sir Frederick Carrington, who was then landing his force at Beira, was to reinforce Colonel Plumer and so raise the siege of Mafeking; and later, when it became known that Sir Archibald Hunter was concentrating a considerable force at Kimberley, which comprised a very large proportion of cavalry and mounted infantry, public opinion in England veered round once more, and it was this force that was generally looked upon as the one destined for the relief of Baden-Powell and his plucky band.

It is not too much to say that the eyes of the whole world were turned towards the little Bechuana-land town at this time, and when it was announced that Lord Roberts had asked the garrison to hold out until May 18, by which time he hoped to relieve them, the tension became greater than ever. They were weary days in London, those days of watching

and waiting for the news that was so terribly long in coming, and as each portion of the great army under Lord Roberts was accounted for hope sank to zero when no force that was obviously moving up to Mafeking could be traced. Methuen was at Boschof and Warrenton, Hunter was driving the Boers before him at Rooidam, Carrington was organising his base camp at Marandellas, and Plumer was marking time at Gaberones. Where, then, was the long-delayed relief to come from? That was the question that each was asking himself, and the answer was known to none. Lord Roberts kept his secret well,—so well, in fact, that even after it was known that the siege was at an end none could say for some days who had led the force or how it was composed.

In Mafeking itself the garrison managed to keep up its spirits, though food was becoming scarcer and scarcer. As had been the case at Kimberley and Ladysmith, the horses in the town were handed over to the commissariat department, while porridge made from sowans appeared on the daily *menu*. Enteric and dysentery were rife, and malaria had broken out in the women's laager; but one and all were determined to hold out until the last gasp and to keep the flag flying, though—saddest of all—the children's graveyard near to the women's laager grew fuller and fuller each week as the delicate young lives succumbed to the trials to which they were subjected. The man who brought about this war will have a heavy account to answer when the Judgment Day arrives.

But little news filtered through from Mafeking to the outside world, though what there was told of the increased privations which the inhabitants of the town were enduring. Not that there was any whining or cavilling at the delay in relief reaching the town: that is not the way of Baden-Powell and those who served under him. They knew that so soon as the Field-Marshal in command could do it, he would put an end to their sufferings, and they looked forward to the time arriving. The laconic "All well" which the commanding officer maintained until the last, showed the cheeriness of their spirits, though to those who could read between the lines the story was obvious.

The Boers had long given up any intentions they might at one time have had of carrying the town by storm, but their dogged determination to starve the garrison into surrender was increased by the news of the defeats and repulses they were suffering in the other theatres of war.

As the middle of May approached, and the day Lord Roberts had named for the relief of Mafeking drew nearer, the enemy prepared to make their final effort; so on May 12 Commandant Eloff, the grandson of President Kruger, led a storming-party against the town, selecting the old British South Africa police fort as his objective. News had reached the Boers of a strong British column having arrived at Vryburg on its way northwards, and with a new-found courage they determined to come to close quarters with the half-starved garrison of Mafeking, trusting to their superior numbers to gain them the day.

Their plan was well conceived, and only very narrowly escaped success: had Cronje been in supreme command instead of Snyman a different ending to the siege might well have been recorded. Under cover of darkness General Snyman made a feint attack with his artillery on the eastern side of the town, while Eloff with some 700 men rushed the outer ring of forts to the west, driving the British pickets in before him, taking the garrison by surprise, and eventually compelling the officer in command of the forts, Colonel Hore, to surrender. The alarm, however, had been given to Colonel Baden-Powell by telephone, and he took prompt measures to stem the tide. He had no intention of being beaten in the last lap, as it were.

As the day broke, things seemed almost hopeless for the garrison. The native quarter of the town was in flames, fired by the Boers; one of the forts was in the enemy's hands, and its commandant taken prisoner, and an exulting telegram was received from the Boers stating this fact. Nothing daunted, Colonel Baden-Powell set about retrieving his fallen fortunes, and the reserves under Major Panzera were sent forward at the double to form a new line of defence along the railway, to keep the enemy in play, while the remainder of the force carried out one of the most daring movements that the annals of the British army can show. This was nothing less than an attempt to get between Eloff and his party and the main body of the Boers, and subsequent events showed how well Baden-Powell had laid his plans.

The position at this time was indeed an extraordinary one. Colonel Hore was a prisoner in his own fort, the supports of Commandant Eloff—who had sent to Snyman to say that the town was practically in his hands—were effectually beaten back, and he himself surrounded without his apparently being aware of the fact. So the fighting raged for some hours, Eloff maintaining the position he had gained, while the garrison drew the cordon tighter and tighter around him. Had it not been for the underlying grimness of the thing, the situation would have been comic in the extreme.

At last the Boer storming-party realised what had happened when it was too late for them to remedy their blunder. They tried to force their way back, but in vain. Whichever way they turned there were countless British rifles spitting vicious tongues of death-dealing flame at them, while a 7-pounder, under Lieutenant Daniels, was adding to their discomfort. Not even Cronje was trapped more neatly than were these Boers under Eloff. Early in the day the first party of about eighty Boers surrendered to the garrison that they had hoped to take by surprise, but the rest maintained their ground with the courage that is born of despair.

Had General Snyman only possessed sufficient military skill to have grasped the situation even at this time, he could have turned the tide and gained the day; for the British force, weakened as it was by the seven months' siege it had undergone, and tired out by its long spell of fighting, would have been too weak to have offered more than a feeble

resistance to the overwhelming odds that the Boers possessed.

A dropping fire was kept up all day between the fort where Eloff had placed himself and the British force, but this gradually died away, and at length all was silence. This silence was broken by a tremendous outburst of firing from the fort, which caused the garrison to fly hastily to their posts; but to their surprise they found that the Boer fire was not directed towards the town, but in the direction of the main Boer laager. The affair was an enigma to those inside the town, but later they learnt that it was Eloff and his men firing on about eighty of their party who declined to stay longer in the fort and prepared to return to the main body. The Britishers now closed in towards the fort, and the end was not long delayed, for Eloff at length surrendered to Colonel Hore, his own prisoner. The victory of the garrison was thus complete. They had taken in all about 120 prisoners, and could have greatly increased this number had it not been for the fact that so many extra mouths to feed meant a serious drain on their small stock of food. This was the last event of importance in the siege, and a brilliant achievement it was. Five days later, in the early morning of May 17, the combined forces of Brigadier-General Mahon and Colonel Plumer entered the town amid the frantic enthusiasm of the garrison.

This relief fell upon the world like a bolt from the blue. Who the leader was or where the force had come from were mysteries that none could explain. Vague rumours from Boer sources of a

force being on its way to Mafeking from the south reached England from time to time, but no one knew whether to believe them or not. From what was afterwards learnt, a force composed almost entirely of mounted men, principally from the Imperial Yeomanry and the Colonial Volunteers, with horse artillery and quick-firing Vickers-Maxim or "pom-pom" guns, and in light marching order, had been detached from Sir A. Hunter's force on May 4 under the command of Colonel Mahon, with instructions to push straight on to Mafeking without delay. Silently this force, about 3000 strong, quitted Kimberley and worked its way northwards along the railway line, the rapidity with which it moved completely nonplussing the Boers, who offered but feeble opposition until Vryburg was reached, which occurred on May 9, the force having covered a distance of 120 miles in five days. A halt of two days took place at Vryburg while communications were opened up with Colonel Plumer and arrangements made for the effective co-operation of the two forces.

When the force under Colonel Mahon again moved forward they came into contact with the enemy at Koodoosrand, the Boers occupying a strong position right across the line of march; but the combined fire of the Royal Horse Artillery, "pom-pom," and Maxim guns which the British brought to bear on them proved so hot that they were forced back after a short but sharp engagement, and the road was left open to the advancing force.

The two forces, Mahon's and Plumer's, met at

the little village of Madibi, about twenty miles west of Mafeking, and early on May 15 they came across the enemy, who had placed themselves between the relief force and the besieged town. A hot fight ensued for an hour or so, but at the end of that time the Boers had had enough, and were glad to fall back to the trenches on the eastern side of Mafeking, where they were assailed by Baden-Powell's force aided by the guns of the now rapidly approaching relief force.

After a short halt the relief force moved forward once more, and finally entered Mafeking on May 17, and the siege of Mafeking was at an end, the town having been relieved on the day previous to the one that Lord Roberts had named as marking the limit of their endurance.

The casualties in the town during the investment amounted to 5 officers and 62 men killed, 8 officers and 143 men wounded, and 5 men had died of their wounds. In addition, many in the town had died from disease.

It was but an incident in the war this defence of the little out-of-the-way town of Mafeking, and the final issue of the war would not have been affected in the least, whatever the result of the siege had been; and yet when at length the electric wires throbbed with the welcome news, and carried it to the outermost portions of the empire, scenes of joy—wild, delirious, heartfelt joy—took place such as had never before been known. It will be long before there is another day in London to approach that famous Saturday, the 19th of May, when the entire

population rejoiced over the deliverance of Colonel Baden-Powell and his gallant band after a siege of 218 days.

The reason for the outburst is not far to seek. The plucky defence of the little town had gone straight to the hearts of all as nothing else would have done, and so the British race all the world over "let itself go," to use an expressive colloquialism.

A word of praise is due to Colonel Plumer and his men, whose good work in protecting the railway line from Bulawayo to the south, and so immensely furthering the rapid provisioning of Mafeking, is liable to be forgotten among the other events of the war,—the more so as there were no brilliant pen-artists with this force, as there were with almost every other.¹ But in Rhodesia the events of Plumer's long contest with the Boers round Mafeking will long be remembered, as they deserve to be throughout the empire.

As for the siege of Mafeking itself, that will go down to history side by side with the famous defence of Lucknow, and the empire's youngest limb—Rhodesia—may well be proud of the part which her sons played in this bright episode in the history of the empire.

APPENDIX I.

RETURN OF THE OUTPUT OF GOLD FROM NOVEMBER 1891 TO JUNE 1900.

		oz.	dwts.
During period from Nov. 1891 to July 31, 1898		6,470	13
1898.	August	27	2
	September	2,346	10
	October	3,913	0
	November	5,566	13
	December	6,258	19
1899.	January	6,370	15
	February	6,243	18
	March	6,614	2
	April	5,755	1
	May	4,938	13
	June	6,103	18
	July	6,031	7
	August	3,177	2
	September	5,653	7
	October	4,276	8
	November	4,670	0
	December	5,289	0
1900.	January	5,242	0
'	February	6,232	15
	March	6,285	16
	April	5,456	0
	May	6,553	12
	June	6,185	9
Grand total		125,662	0

APPENDIX II.

The following table shows the class of labour most in demand at present, together with the average rates of wages in the four leading towns and the number of hours worked:—

NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT.	SALISBURY.		BULAWAYO.		GWELO.		UMTALI.	
	Rates of wages.	Average hours per diem.	Rates of wages.	Average hours per diem.	Rates of wages.	Average hours per diem.	Rates of wages.	Average hours per diem.
Book-keepers	£15 to £40	8	£15 to £40	..	..	..	£25	8
Blacksmiths	20s.	8	20s.	9	20s.	8	30s.	8
Bricklayers	20s.	8	20s.	9	30s.	8	20s.	8
Brickmakers	20s.	8	..	..	15s.	8	25s.	8
Carpenters and joiners	25s. to 30s.	8	20s.	9	30s.	8	20s. to 25s.	8
Clerks	£15 to £25	8	£15 to £30	8	..	..	£15 to £25	8
Cooks	£4 to £25	..	£4 to £10	..	..	..	£4 to £6	..
Domestic servants, native	£1 to £5	..	£1 to £5	..	£1 to £5	..	£1 to £4	..
Engine-drivers . . . . .	..	..	20s.	10	..	..	..	..
Farmers	£15 to £20	..	..	..	..	..	£15	..
Fitters . . . . .	..	..	20s. to 25s.	9	..	..	£20	..
Gangers . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	£25	..
Improvers . . . . .	..	..	13s. to 16s.	9	..	..	10s. to 15s.	8
Labourers	10s. to 15s.	8	13s. to 16s.	9	..	..	30s.	8
Masons	20s. to 30s.	8	20s. to 30s.	9	30s.	8	20s.	..
Miners	20s.	..	20s.	9	£25	8	£20 to £30	10
Overseers . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	30s.	8
Painters	20s.	8	20s.	..	20s.	8	25s.	..
Prinners . . . . .	..	..	..	..	£20	8	£30 to £25	..
Prospectors	15s. to 30s.	..	..	..	20s.	8	..	..
Sawyers . . . . .	..	..	20s.	9	35s.	8	£20 to £40	10
Stone-cutters . . . . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	£5	10
Wagon-conductors	£20	..	£5 to £8	..	..	..	30s.	..
" drivers	£5 to £10	..	..	..	25s.	8	£15 to £20	8
" makers . . . . .	..	..	£10 to £20	8	20s.	8	20s. to 30s.	8
Shop assistants	£18 to £25	8	20s.	8	10s. to £5	10	5s. to 20s.	..
Tinsmiths and plumbers	20s. to 25s.	8	15s. to 35s.	..	..	..	..	..
Raw native labour	5s. to 30s.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

There is no demand for skilled labour in Victoria, Tuli, and Melsetter. There is a fair demand in Bulawayo, Salisbury, and Umtali. The average monthly rent in the towns is from £3 to £5 per month per room (unfurnished); hotels, 12s. 6d. to 15s. per diem for board and lodging.

Note.—In some instances monthly wages are quoted, and in others weekly, according to whether the work is clerical or manual.

INDEX.

- Abercorn, Duke of, 38, 41, 153, 154, 158.
 Aborigines Protection Society, letter to Lobengula, 35.
 Acutt, Mr, 113.
 Administration of Rhodesia, Sir Richard Martin's report on, 252-263—Bulawayo Committee's report, 264—the Chartered Company's defence, 265 *et seq.*—modifications of the charter, 273 *et seq.*—the future administration, 318.
 African-Portuguese Syndicate, 147.
 Afrikander Corps, the, 173, 177, 186, 188, 191, 200, 204, 205, 207, 217, 228, 231.
 Agnew, Captain, 228.
 Agricultural value of Rhodesia, 249, 280 *et seq.*
 Alderson, Lieut.-Colonel, 241, 243.
 Armstrong, Mr O. R., 264.
 Asher, Mr, 100.
 Babyan, 225, 226.
 Baden - Powell, Major - General R. S. S., 215, 225, 229-232, 242—his defence of Mafeking, 323, 325, 341 *et seq.*
 Baines, Thomas, 3.
 Balfour, Mr A. J., 146, 160.
 Balfour, Rev. Canon, 55.
 Banks-White, Lieutenant, 220.
 Baxter, Trooper, 203, 204.
 Beal, Mr Robert, 209, 211, 217, 221, 240.
 Beale, Lieutenant, 115.
 Bechuanaland Border Police, 84, 96, 115.
 Bechuanaland Protectorate, part of, transferred to the Chartered Company, 127.
 Bechuanaland Railway Company. See Rhodesia Railways.
 Behr, murder of, 240.
 Beira, 64.
 Beira Railway, the, 72, 83, 119, 270, 271, 286.
 Beit, Mr Alfred, 38, 124, 145, 147, 153, 155, 158, 159, 308.
 Belingwe district, 178, 198.
 Bent, Mr J. D., on the Zimbabwe ruins, 8, 9.
 Bembesi river, 220.
 Bently, Mr, murder of, 171.
 Beresford, Captain, 226, 227.
 Bigham, Mr, 147.
 Biscoe, Captain, 207.
 Bisset, Captain, 193, 194, 196, 202.
 Blake, Mr, 147, 152, 157, 160.
 Bird, Major, 359, 360.
 Blantyre, the telegraph reaches, 123.
 Boer war, the, 315, 316, 319—the siege of Kimberley, 321 *et seq.*—the defence of Mafeking, 341 *et seq.*
 Bonsor mine, the, 283, 284.
 Borrow, Captain, 44, 59, 93, 96, 99, 104, 105.
 Bowyer, Sir Graham, 132, 134, 153.
 Brand, Captain, 188, 193, 217.

Bridge, Sir John, 139.

British South Africa Company, 3

—approach Lobengula for a concession, 33 *et seq.*—opposition of the indunas, 34—action of the Aborigines Protection Society, 35—Dr Jameson uses his influence with Lobengula, 36—the terms offered, 37—the concession obtained, 38—charter granted, *ib.*—preparations begun, 39—the pioneer force and its object, 43—across the Maclontsie, 46—Fort Tuli constructed, 48—threats from Lobengula, 49, 53—Forts Victoria and Charter built, 54—Mashonaland formally occupied, 55—Fort Salisbury built, 56—prospecting licences issued, *ib.*—granting of farm rights, 62—Manicaland concession, 63—trouble with Portuguese, *ib. et seq.*—Boer attempt to establish a colony in Mashonaland, 68—the fifty-per-cent clause grievance, 70 *et seq.*—cutting down expenses, 73—formation of a volunteer force, *ib.*—portion of the police disbanded, 74—attitude of the Matabele, *ib.*—Matabele massacre Mashonas, 77—necessity of crushing the Matabele, 80—Mr Rhodes's counsel, *ib.*—Imperial sanction of the war, 82—Mr Rhodes finances the campaign, 83—the Matabele war, 84 *et seq.*—Matabeleland thrown open for prospecting, 116—the Victoria Agreement, *ib.*—hostility in England to the Company, 117—modifications of the charter, *ib.*—Dr Jameson appointed administrator of Matabeleland, 118—development of the country, 119—part of Nyssaland transferred to the Company, 122—the Jameson raid, 124 *et seq.*—Mr Labouchere's attacks on the Company, 143—the Company's suggestions as to future administration, 145—evidence before the Jameson Raid Committee, 147 *et seq.*—the Committee's report, 157—Mr Labouchere's report, 159—causes

leading to the Matabele rising, 162 *et seq.*—the Matabele rebellion, 170 *et seq.*—rebellion of the Mashonas, 220, 240 *et seq.*—Sir Richard Martin's inquiry, 252 *et seq.*—Bulawayo Committee's report, 264—the Company and Sir Richard Martin's report, 265—progress in Rhodesia, 269 *et seq.*—alterations in the charter, 273 *et seq.*—the Company and Mr Rhodes's railway extension, 291, 305 *et seq.*—Rhodesian Legislative Council, 309 *et seq.*—the future of the Company, 318.

British West Charterland Company, 280.

Brown, Captain H., 223.

Bulawayo Field Force, 177, 188, 193, 200, 204, 207, 217, 222.

Bulawayo, Matabele kraal at, 17—the Queen's envoys arrive, 40—first race meeting at, 42—evacuated by Lobengula, 95—formal British occupation, 96—growth of the township, 119—panic in, 173—laager formed, 175—another false alarm, 176—railway extension to, 247—prices of commodities during the rising, 250—a "City of Palaces," *ib.*—committee's report on the administration, 264—railway opened to, 269, 270—two branch lines from, 305—317.

Burnett, Captain, 54, 86.

Burnham, the American scout, 95, 102, 103, 105, 232.

Buxton, Mr Sydney, 117, 147.

Campbell, Captain, 86.

Campbell's store, 184, 185.

Campbell-Bannerman, Sir Henry, 147.

Cape Parliament, inquiry into the Jameson raid, 144.

Cape to Cairo Railway scheme, extension to Bulawayo, 247, 269, 270—negotiations for further extension, 289 *et seq.*—two branch lines from Bulawayo, 305, 306—the trunk line, 306—309.

Cardigan, Captain, 204.

Carr, Captain, 115.

- Carrington, Sir Frederick, 214-216, 222, 224, 225, 229-232, 234, 240-242, 244, 361, 362.
- Castens, Mr, 310.
- Cattle question, the, 164 *et seq.*—effect of rinderpest, 166.
- Cawston, Mr G., 38, 153.
- Celliers, Trooper, 186, 187.
- Chamberlain, Mr Joseph, 141, 143, 144, 147, 152, 154, 155, 160, 274, 275.
- Charter, Fort, 54, 85.
- Charter granted to British South Africa Company, 38—modifications of, 117, 273 *et seq.*
- Clarke, Lieut.-Colonel Sir M. J., K.C.M.G., 310.
- Coalfields, 292, 306.
- Colenbrander, Mr Johann, 49, 53, 177, 234-237.
- Colquhoun, Mr, first administrator of Mashonaland, 53, 54, 62, 63, 70.
- Coope, Captain, 212.
- Coryndon, Mr, 162.
- Coventry, Captain the Hon. C., 96, 100, 133, 136, 140.
- Cowen, Captain, 350.
- Crewe, Lieutenant, 193.
- Crippa, Mr, 147.
- Crocodile Pools, 353, 360.
- Crocodile river, 3.
- Cromer, Lord, 299.
- Cronje, General, 136, 344, 347-349, 364.
- Cumming's store, 180 *et seq.*
- Customs duties, Mr Rhodes's proposal, 120, 121—introduction of, in Rhodesia, 311-315.
- Dallamore, Captain, 113.
- Daniela, Lieutenant, 365.
- Daniels, Trooper, treachery of, 100.
- Dawson, Mr James, 97, 172, 187, 193, 195, 204, 206.
- Dawson's Scouts, 177.
- De Beers Company smuggles arms into Johannesburg, 129—assists in the defence of Kimberley, 327, 331, 334.
- Doornkop, 136.
- Duncan, Mr A. H. F., 171, 172, 182, 185.
- Dunraven mine, the, 283, 284.
- Egerton, Mr, M.P., 210.
- Elibani Hills, fighting at, 184.
- Ellis, Mr John, 147.
- Eloff, Commandant, 363-366.
- Emhlangen, Matabele kraal at, 17.
- Enkeldoorn, 241, 242.
- Fairhairn, Mr, 100.
- Farm rights, difficulty regarding, at Salisbury, 62.
- Farrar, Mr G., 130, 141.
- Ferguson, Captain, 40.
- Ferguson, Lieutenant V., 215.
- Fife, Duke of, 38, 153, 154.
- Filabuai district, 171, 211.
- Fitzclarence, Captain, 345, 346, 350.
- Fitzgerald, Captain, 113.
- Fonseca's farm, 194.
- Forbes, Captain, 48.
- Forbes, Major, 64, 65, 73, 84, 86, 90, 95, 99-103, 105, 109, 112, 113, 115.
- French, General, 339.
- Fynn, Captain, 195, 204, 207.
- Gaberones, 360, 362.
- Garden, Captain, 171.
- Geslong mine, the, 270, 283, 284.
- German Emperor, telegram to President Kruger from, 137—Mr Rhodes's interview with, 299, 300.
- Gibson, Sergeant, 112.
- Gifford, Lord, V.C., 38, 153.
- Gifford, Hon. Maurice, 171, 172, 177, 180, 182, 193-196.
- Gifford's Horse, 193, 207, 221, 240.
- Goldfields, ancient workings, 8, 10, 13—in Mashonaland, 56—fifty-per-cent clause grievance, 70—employment of Matabele in the mines, 74—first gold returns, 283—output of gold, November 1891 to June 1900, 370.
- Goodenough, General, 212.
- Gooding, Trooper, 105.
- Goold-Adams, Colonel, 84, 96-98.
- Graham, Mr, native commissioner at Inyati, 183, 184.
- Greenfield, Captain, 102.
- Grey, Captain, 199, 203, 204, 207, 208, 210, 217.
- Grey, Earl, 38, 153, 154, 171, 222, 225, 242, 261.

- Grey, Colonel R., 133, 140, 309.
 Grey's Scouts, 177, 183, 193, 200,
 202, 204, 207, 217, 221.
 Griffen, Mr, 310.
 Grimmer, Mr, 309.
 Grootboom, John, 234, 235.
 Gu-Buluwayo. See Bulawayo.
 Gwaai river, 216, 219, 228, 230.
 Gwanda district, 188.
 Gwelo, 178, 209, 250, 296, 317.

 Hammond, Mr John Hays, 125,
 126, 130, 141.
 Harcourt, Sir William, 146-149,
 151, 160.
 Harris, Dr Rutherford, 62, 146,
 147, 155, 156.
 Hart-Dyke, Sir William, 147.
 Hartley, 62.
 Hartley or Umfuli goldfields, 56.
 Hawkins, Mr Justice, 140.
 Hawksley, Mr, 157, 159, 160.
 Heany, Captain, 92, 100.
 Heany, Major M., 44, 45, 59.
 Henderson, Trooper, 186.
 Heyman, Captain, 48, 66, 67.
 Hicks-Beach, Sir Michael, 147.
 Homan monopoly, the, 262, 263.
 Hook, Lieutenant, 203.
 Hore, Colonel, 364-366.
 Hoste, Mr H. F., 45.
 Hunter, Sir Archibald, 361, 362,
 367.
 Hutchinson, Mr, 309.
 Hut-tax, the, 267.

 Ingram, the American scout, 95,
 102, 103, 105, 107, 110.
 Ingram, Mr W. B., 147.
 Insiza district, 171, 180, 210.
 Inyati, 17, 183, 185, 222, 223, 231.
 Iron-Mine Hill, 84, 86.

 Jackson, Mr W. L., 147.
 Jameson, Dr, influences Lobengula
 in favour of the Chartered Com-
 pany, 36, 37—accompanies the
 pioneer force, 53—visits Manica-
 land, 54, 63—administrator of
 Mashonaland, 70, 77, 79—decides
 upon crushing the Matabele, 80
 —directs the campaign, 86, 96,
 99-101, 109, 113—first adminis-
 trator of Matabeleland, 118—
 created C.B., 121—the Jameson
 raid, 124 *et seq.*—brought up
 for trial, 139—his sentence, 140
 —examination by select com-
 mittee, 152—246, 266.
 Jameson raid, the, 124 *et seq.*—
 discontent of the Uitlanders,
 125—Mr Rhodes's intention, 128
 —the "Reform Committee," 129
 —the Committee's letter, 130—
 differences among the Uitlanders,
 131—Dr Jameson takes action,
 132—the raiders enter the Trans-
 vaal, 133—surrender of the force,
 136—German Emperor's tele-
 gram, 137—raiders handed over
 to the British Government, 138
 —brought up for trial, 139—
 the verdict, 140—Cape Parlia-
 mentary inquiry, 145—House of
 Commons Committee, 146 *et seq.*
 —not responsible for the Mata-
 bele rebellion, 163.
 Jarvis, Mr A. Weston, 210.
 Jenkins's store, 183.
 Jenner, Major, 243.
 Johannesburg, column raised for
 service in Matabele war, 84—
 force disbanded, 114—discontent
 of the Uitlanders, 125—Dr Jame-
 son investigates the position, 126
 —the "Reform Committee," 129
 —the Committee's letter, 130—
 Sir Jacobus de Wet's visit, 138—
 "Reform Committee" arrested,
 139—trial of the Reformers, 141
 —the sentence, *ib.*
 Johnson, Major Frank, 43-45, 48,
 49.
 Johnston, Sir H. H., 122.

 Kekewich, Captain, 228, 230.
 Kekewich, Lieut.-Colonel, 326, 328,
 329.
 Khama, 46, 96.
 Kimberley, siege of, 321 *et seq.*
 Kirton, Captain, 102.
 Kitchener, Lord, 333.
 Knapp, Captain, 213.
 Kraals, Matabele, 16, 23 *et seq.*
 Kruger, President, 125, 131, 137,
 138, 141, 152, 319, 322, 333.
 Krugersdorp, 136.
 Kunzi, 244.

- Labouchere, Mr, 117, 143, 147, 150, 154-157, 159, 160, 187.
 Laing, Captain, 198, 199, 225.
 Lamb, Lieutenant H., 207.
 Land question, the 62—Victoria Agreement, 116, 279—large concessions to companies, 280 *et seq.*—the Land Bill, 310, 311.
 Lanning, native commissioner, 219.
 Lawley, Hon. A., 310.
 Legislative Council, the, constituted, 309.
 Lendy, Captain, 78, 79, 91, 93, 100.
 Leonard, Mr C., 130.
 Limbanosotas, 243.
 Limpopo river, 3.
 Llewellyn, Captain, 358.
 Lobengula becomes king of the Matabele, 18—personal appearance, 20—coronation ceremonies, *ib.*—rids himself of antagonistic indunas, 22—toleration of Europeans, *ib.*—the Tati concession, 23—his principal kraal, 24—respect for the "Great White Queen," 25—extent of his rule, 26—rain-making, 27—his wardance, 31—approached for a concession to the Chartered Company, 33—opposition among the indunas, 34 *et seq.*—letter from the Aborigines Protection Society, 35—the concession granted, 38—alarmed by rumour of the company's intentions, 39—receives two envoys from the Queen, 40—threatens the pioneer force, 49, 53—his impi enters Mashonaland, 76—the Matabele war, 86 *et seq.*—he retreats to the bush, 95—two of his ambassadors shot by the British, 97—called on to surrender, 99—his reply suppressed by troopers, 100—patrol sent in pursuit of him, *ib.*—dies of dysentery, 114.
 Loch, Lord, 44, 81, 98, 117.
 Loché, 34, 35.
 Loew, Mr, 150, 265.
 Lo Magondi goldfield, 56—district, 243.
 Long, Trooper, 204.
 Longwe, 113.
 "Luke xiv. 31," Mr Rhodes's enigmatic telegram, 80.
 Lumsden, Captain, 195-197.
 Lynch, Trooper, 110.
 Macfarlane, Captain, 186, 196, 200, 201, 205, 206, 216, 219.
 M'Kinnon, Mr A., 264.
 MacMahon, Captain Sir H., 243.
 Madden, escapes from Matabele at Inyati, 185.
 Maddocks, murder of, 170.
 Mafeking, 83, 128, 133—defence of, 341 *et seq.*
 Maguire, Mr Rochefort, 33, 34, 37, 38, 153, 158.
 Mahon, General, 366, 367.
 Makalakas, the, 14, 15.
 Makoni, shot by Major Watts, 242.
 Makunga, 234.
 Mandy, Captain, 44.
 Mangwe, 178.
 Manicaland, Dr Jameson and Messrs Colquhoun and Selous visit, 54—acquisition of, 63—friction with Portuguese, *ib.*—prompt action of the Chartered Company, 64—attempt to settle the difficulty, 65—the Portuguese take the field, 66—decisive British victory, 67—a treaty concluded, 68—the township of Umtali, 72.
 Martin, Sir Richard, 152, 244, 245—report on the administration and cause of the rising, 252 *et seq.*—anonymous evidence, 253—the labour question, 254 *et seq.*—the cattle question, 260, 261—the Homan monopoly, 262, 263—causes of the rebellion, 263—the Bulawayo Committee's report, 264—the Chartered Company and the reports, 264, 265.
 Mashingombi, 244.
 Mashonaland, 2—mystic ruins in, 4—formally taken possession of by the pioneers, 55—the goldfields, 56—prospecting licences issued to the pioneers, *ib.*—the rush to the goldfields, 57—hardships during the rainy season, 58—the granting of farm rights, 62—call for volunteers to occupy

- Manicaland, 63—formation of the Mashonaland Horse, 73—portion of the police force disbanded, 74—the Matebele impis cross the border, 76—and massacre the Mashonas at Victoria, 77—the police rout the Matabele, 79.
- Mashonaland Horse, 73, 84.
- Mashonas, the, inhabited Rhodesia in the seventeenth century, 14—driven to the hills by Matabele invaders, 15—under British protection, 76—insulting attitude towards the Matabele, *ib.*—massacred at Victoria by the Matabele, 77—rebellion of, 221, 240 *et seq.*
- Mashonas, rebellion of the: causes of the rising, 221—beginning of the rebellion, 240—the Government send up troops, 241—desultory skirmishing, *ib.*—Sir Frederick Carrington arrives at Salisbury, 242—Major Watts's patrol, *ib.*—patrols sent against Umtegeza, Limbanotas, and the rebels in the Mazoe and Lo Magondi districts, 243—final pacification by Sir Richard Martin, 244—casualties during the revolt, 245—Sir Richard Martin's inquiry into the causes of the rebellion, 252 *et seq.*
- Massi-Kessi, 64.
- Matabele, the, a branch of the Zulu tribe, 15—usurp the country of the Mashonas and the Makalakas, *ib.*—great warriors and cattle-raisers, 16—their kraals, 17—Lobengula becomes king, 18—the war costume, 19—coronation ceremonies, 20—Lobengula's toleration of Europeans, 22—the Tati concession, 23—the Bulawayo kraal described, 24—the king as rain-maker, 27—the annual war-dance, 29 *et seq.*, 43—the granting of the concession to the Chartered Company, 33 *et seq.*—the Queen's envoys visit Lobengula, 40—their attitude to the pioneer force, 49, 53—employment of, in the mines, 74—their lawlessness, 75—impis enter Mashonaland, 76—they massacre the Mashonaa, 77—warned by Dr Jameson, *ib.*—routed by the police, 79—the Matabele war, 81 *et seq.*—the Matabele rebellion, 162 *et seq.*—the cattle question, 164 *et seq.*—the native police, 167—the witch-doctors, *ib.*—their hatred of the whites, 169.
- Matabeleland, 2—mystic ruins in, 11—thrown open for prospecting, 116—the Victoria Agreement, *ib.*—Order in Council regulating the government of the country, 117—Dr Jameson appointed first administrator, 118—the development of the country, 119—Mr Rhodes's proposal as to Customs rejected by Lord Ripon, 120—formation of mining companies, 121—the Jameson raid, 124 *et seq.*
- Matabeleland Mounted Police, 171.
- Matabele rebellion, the: causes of the rising, 162 *et seq.*—the first act, 170—council of defence at Bulawayo, 171—patrols sent to Insiza and Shangani, *ib.*—rapid spread of the rebellion, *ib.*—patrols sent to Filahusi and "Essexvale," 172—settlers called on for active service, *ib.*—the Afrikander Corps, 173—panic in Bulawayo, *ib.*—the Bulawayo laager, 175—another false alarm, 176—Bulawayo field force organised, 177—laagers formed at Gwelo, Mangwe, and Belingwe, 178—guarding the Mangwe road, *ib.*—the relief of Cumming's store, 180 *et seq.*—Grey's account, 183—patrol sent to Inyati, *ib.*—the patrol attacked on the Eli-bani Hills, 184—Campbell's store fortified, 185—relief force from Bulawayo, 186—fight in the Shiloh Hills, 187—Dawson's patrol, *ib.*—the Gwanda patrol, 188 *et seq.*—a six hours' fight, 190 *et seq.*—the Shiloh patrol, 193 *et seq.*—fighting at the Umguza, 194—a hot fight, 195—Belingwe reported safe, 198—

- Grey and Vau Niekerk attacked near the Umguza, 199—the enemy repulsed at Colonel Napier's farm, 200—fighting at the Umguza, 201-206—a force despatched to meet the Salisbury column, 207—the two forces meet, 209—a skirmish in the Insiza valley, 210—Colonel Plumer arrives with reinforcements, 212—the enemy attacked eight miles from Bulawayo, *ib.*—Colonel Plumer in action, 213—the Imperial Government undertakes the crushing of the rebellion, 214—arrival of Sir Frederick Carrington and staff, 215—patrols sent to the north and north-west of Bulawayo, 216—Colonel Spreckley attacks an impi near the Umguza, 217—the witch-doctors' vain promises, 218—a force sent to the Shiloh district, 219—Bulawayo Field Force disbanded, 222—the Matabele broken up at Inyati, 223—a proclamation of clemency, 224—the campaign in the Matoppos, 225 *et seq.*—fighting at the Gwaai, 228—the execution of Uwini, 229—operations in the Somabula forest, 230—defeat of Wedza's impi, 231—the M'Limo shot, 232—Mr Rhodes tries his influence with the natives, 234 *et seq.*—the indunas state their grievances, 236—peace arranged, 238—the total casualties, 239—Sir Richard Martin's inquiry into the causes of the rebellion, 252 *et seq.*
- Matabele war, the, decided on by the Chartered Company, 81—Imperial sanction given, 82—beginning of the campaign, 86—a night attack on the British laager, 88 *et seq.*—repulse of the Matabele, 91—battle of Bembesi river, 93—the Matabele evacuate and set fire to Bulawayo, 95—movements of the Tuli Column, 96—two of Lobengula's ambassadors shot, 97—fight at the Singuesi, 98—Lobengula called on to surrender, 99—his reply suppressed by Troopers Daniels and Wilson, 100—the pursuit of Lobengula, *ib. et seq.*—the fate of Major Wilson's party, 102 *et seq.*—retreat of the patrol to Bulawayo, 109—arrival at Longwe, 113—news of the relief column, *ib.*—the forces reach Bulawayo, 114—death of Lobengula, *ib.*—the end of the war, *ib.*—result of the campaign, 115.
- Matoppos Hills, the, 216, 225.
- Mauch, Carl, 3.
- Maxwell, Major, 40.
- Mazoe district, 243.
- Mazoe valley goldfield, 56.
- Meikle, Captain, 194.
- Mellidew, Surgeon-Major, 40.
- Merriman, Mr, 150.
- Metcalfe, Sir Charles, 209, 296.
- Methuen, Lord, 46, 329-331, 336, 361, 362.
- Milner, Sir Alfred, 275, 314.
- Milton, Mr W. H., 310.
- M'Limo, the, 20, 168, 179, 221, 229, 232.
- Molyneux, Captain, 207.
- Mombo, 4, 11.
- Monomatapa, 14.
- M'Tini, 230.
- Mundy, Corporal, 98.
- Napier, Captain, 101, 103.
- Napier, Colonel, 171, 172, 183, 200-202, 207, 208, 210, 211, 247.
- Native cattle question, the, 164, *et seq.*, 260, 261.
- Native labour question, 254-260, 265 *et seq.*—scarcity of labour, 276 *et seq.*, 284—the "native labour bureau," 285.
- Nicholson, Captain, 171.
- Nicholson, Mr, 189.
- Niekerk, Captain, 188, 193, 199, 202, 210, 217, 228.
- North Charterland Company, 281.
- Nyssaland, part of, transferred to the Chartered Company, 122.
- O'Leary, Sergeant-Major, 182.
- Ophir, the land of, 10.
- Orpen, Mr, 310.
- Paget, Colonel, 228, 230, 231, 242.

- Panzer, Major, 364.
 Paton, Lieutenant, 351.
 Pauling & Co., Messrs, 271.
 Peakman, Colonel, 335.
 Pennefeather, Lieut.-Colonel, 49, 50, 53, 55.
 Phillips, Mr L., 130, 141, 147.
 Phœnicians, supposed settlement in Rhodesia of, 9.
 Pioneer force for Mashonaland organised, 43 — its composition, 44 — equipment, 45 — crosses the Macloutsie, 46—precautions against attack, 47 — Fort Tuli constructed, 48—threatened by Lobengula, 49 — the making of the road, 50—sickness among the horses, 53—danger of a Matabele attack, *ib.*—Forts Victoria and Charter built, 54—the destination reached, 55—the force disbanded, 56.
 Pitsani, 128, 130, 132.
 Pittendrigh, Captain, 183, 200.
 Plumer, Colonel Herbert, 211-214, 216, 219, 223, 225-227, 323-325, 355-362, 366, 367, 369.
 Pollock, Baron, 140.
 Portuguese, attempt to settle in Monomatapa, 14 — difficulties with, in Manicaland, 63—they seize Massi-Kessi, 64—the tables turned, *ib.*—attempt to drive the British from Manicaland, 65 *et seq.*—defeated by Captain Heyman, 67—a treaty concluded, 68.
 Proclamation of clemency to Matabele rebels, 224.
 Prospecting licences issued to Mashonaland pioneers, 56.
 Quested, Mr, 86, 88, 91.
 Raaf, Commandant, 84, 96, 100, 101, 111.
 Race-meeting, the first in Rhodesia, 42.
 Railways. See Beira Railway, Cape to Cairo Railway, and Rhodesian Railways.
 Redrup, Mr S., 264.
 Rensburg, Captain A. H. van, 173, 186, 204, 207.
 Rhodes, Mr Cecil, the moving spirit in the Chartered Company, 33—bitter feeling against, 34—his aim in forming the Chartered Company, 36—obtains the charter, 38—first visit to Mashonaland, 70, 72—finances the Matabele war, 83—his expenditure on Rhodesia, *ib.*—at Bulawayo, 113, 114—attempts to discredit, in England, 117—the Beira railway, 119—proposal regarding customs duties in Matabeleland, 120—made a Privy Councillor, 121—pushes on the trans-continental telegraph, 123 — his connection with the Jameson raid, 124-129, 131-136, 141, 142, 145—examination by the select committee, 147 *et seq.*—154, 157-160—accompanies the Salisbury Relief Column, 207, 209—225, 233—uses his influence with the Matabele to conclude peace, 234 *et seq.*—242, 246, 247, 265—his telegraph and railway schemes, 287 *et seq.*, 305 *et seq.*—negotiations with the Government for the extension of the railway north of Bulawayo, 289-298, 300-304—interview with the German Emperor, 299, 300—in Kimberley during the siege, 325, 326, 331, 333, 334, 336.
 Rhodes, Colonel Frank, 130, 141, 142.
 Rhodesia, geographical position, 1 — Mashonaland and Matabeleland, 2—early history, 3 *et seq.*—the Matabele enter the country, 15—Matabeleland under Lobengula, 18 *et seq.*—the concession granted to the Chartered Company, 33 *et seq.*—the pioneer corps, 43 *et seq.*—the founding of the colony, 52 *et seq.*—initial difficulties, 57—acquisition of Manicaland, 63—friction with the Portuguese, 64—trouble with the Transvaal, 68—the fifty-percent clause grievance, 70—war with the Matabele, 74 *et seq.*—Mr Rhodes the sheet-anchor of the country, 83—the end of the war, 114—the Victoria Agree-

- ment, 116—development of the country, 119—part of Nyssaland transferred to the Chartered Company, 122—the Jameson raid, 124 *et seq.*—administration of the country, 145—outbreak of rinderpest, 162—the Matabele rebellion, 163 *et seq.*—the Mashonaland rising, 220, 240 *et seq.*—state of the country after the rising, 245—extension of the railway to Bulawayo, 247—the gold-mines, *ib.*—agricultural value of the country, 249—trade and commerce, 250—Sir Richard Martin's inquiry, 252 *et seq.*—the labour question, 254 *et seq.*—the cattle question, 260 *et seq.*—the Homan monopoly, 262—the causes of the rebellion, 263—the Bulawayo Committee's report, 264—the Company and Sir Richard Martin's report, 265—compulsory labour, 266 *et seq.*—the railway opened to Bulawayo, 269—benefits of the railway, 270—growth of Bulawayo, 271—outcry of stagnant trade, 272—the administration of the country, 273—scarcity of native labour, 276 *et seq.*—the land question, 279 *et seq.*—the first gold return, 283—fall in the gold returns, 285—the native labour bureau, *ib.*—the East Coast Railway reaches Salisbury, 286—the trans-continental telegraph, 287, 305—Mr Rhodes's proposed railway extension northward from Bulawayo, 289 *et seq.*, 305 *et seq.*—constitution of the Legislative Council, 309—the Land Bill, 310—taxation, 311 *et seq.*—the Boer war, 315—the future of the country, 316 *et seq.*—the siege of Kimberley, 321 *et seq.*—events at Mafeking, 341 *et seq.*
- Rhodesia Concessions Company, 281.
- Rhodesia Horse, 127, 136, 152, 153, 171, 177, 186.
- Rhodesia Railways, 290, 291, 300, 303, 309.
- Rhodesian Exploration and Development Company, 281.
- Ridley, Major, 228-230, 232, 244.
- Rinderpest, outbreak in Rhodesia of, 162.
- Ripon, Lord, 81, 82, 117, 121.
- Rixon, Captain, 205.
- Roach, Mr J., 45.
- Roberts, Lord, 333, 337, 353, 361-363, 368.
- Robertson, Major, 223.
- Rorke, Lieutenant, 194.
- Rosmead, Lord, 129, 134, 139, 149, 252.
- Rudd, Mr, 33, 34, 37, 38.
- Ruins, mystic, in Rhodesia, 3—object of the buildings, 4—structure of the Zimbabwe ruins, 5—their religious connection, 6—their ornamentation, 7—used as fortresses, *ib.*—contained furnaces for gold smelting, 8—Mr J. D. Bent's excavations, *ib.*—the inhabitants, 9—Dr Schlichter on the Mombo ruins, 11—native traditions, 12.
- Russell, Lord, of Killowen, 140.
- Salisbury, the fort built, 55—rush of prospectors, 57—scarcity of food, 58—growth of the town, 60—the new town surveyed, 61—the farm-rights difficulty, 62—call for volunteers to occupy Manicaland, 63—Mashonaland Horse constituted, 73—portion of police disbanded, 74—Salisbury Horse formed, 84—panic in the town, 85—laager formed, 241—increase of trade, 250—Beira Railway opened to, 286-317.
- Salisbury Horse, 84, 85, 114.
- Salisbury, Lord, 68.
- Salisbury Relief Column, 207 *et seq.*, 221, 240.
- Sampson, Mr J., 264.
- Sauer, Dr Hans, 234, 309.
- Sawyer, Major, 98.
- Scanlan, Sir Thomas, K.C.M.G., 310.
- Schlichter, Dr, on the Mombo ruins, 11.
- Schreiner, Mr, 151, 265—Premier of Cape Colony, 334.

- Scott-Turner, Major, 329, 330.
 Selous, Mr F. C., 3, 13, 49, 54, 63, 98, 113, 172, 202, 203, 207, 208, 217.
 Shangaans, the, 74.
 Shangani, the, 171.
 Shaw, Miss Flora, 155.
 Shiloh Hills, the, 187, 219.
 Shiloh patrol, the, 193.
 Sikombo, 236.
 Snyman, General, 350, 354, 364, 365.
 Somalula Forest, 230.
 Somnavulu, 239.
 Southey, Captain, 171, 180.
 Spreckley, Captain, 100, 115.
 Spreckley, Colonel, 127, 136, 177, 185, 189, 207, 210, 217, 219, 220, 264.
 Sprigg, Sir Gordon, 290.
 Stent, Captain, 234.
 Stewart's store, 183.
 Swinburne, Sir John, 23.

 Tati, 27.
 Tati Concession, 23.
 Taylor, Mr, Commissioner, 204.
 Tebekwe mine, 283, 284.
 Teck, Prince Alexander of, 232.
 Telegraph, Mr Rhodes's trans-continental, 36, 72, 83, 123, 287, 288, 305—native terror of the wire, 190.
 Tennant, Major, 243.
 Thabas Imamba, 220.
 Thabas Indunas, 208, 218.
 Thabas Isamba, 242.
 Thompson, Mr, 33, 34, 37, 38.
 Thompson, Mr J. Mudie, 264.
 'Times,' the, newspaper, 137, 155.
 Transvaal Boers attempt to establish a colony in Mashonaland, 68.
 Tuli, Fort, 48, 189, 357, 358.

 Uitlanders, the Transvaal, 125 *et seq.*
 Umbozo, 170.
 Umfuli, or Hartley goldfield, 56.
 Unguza river, 194, 199, 200, 202, 205, 207.
 Umlugulu, 226, 227, 236.
 Umsilagaas, first king of the Matabele, 15—succeeded by Lobengula, 18.
 Umsingwani river, 170-172, 188.
 Umtali, 72—New Umtali, 120—250, 317.
 Umtassa, Chief of Manicaland, 63.
 Umtigeza, 243.
 Uwini, shot by Colonel Baden-Powell, 229, 230.

 Ventner, Mr, 150, 265.
 Vernon, Captain, 350, 351.
 Victoria Agreement, the, 116, 279.
 Victoria, Fort, 54, 77, 250.
 Victoria Rangers, 84, 86, 114.
 Vincent, Mr Joseph, 118, 263, 310.
 Vyvyan, Captain, C.B., 215.

 Wages, table of average rate in Bulawayo, Salisbury, Gwelo, and Umtali, 371.
 Walford, Colonel, 347.
 War-dance, Matabele, 29 *et seq.*, 43—Lobengula's dance, 31.
 War dress of the Matabele, 19.
 Watts, Major, 212, 213, 241-243.
 Webster, Sir Richard, 147.
 Wedza, 231.
 Weir, Mr P. V., 264.
 Wet, Sir Jacobus de, 138.
 Wharton, Mr, 147.
 White, Colonel the Hon. Henry, 133, 140.
 White, Major the Hon. Robert, 133, 140.
 Williams, Captain, 350.
 Williams, Captain Gwynnyth, 92.
 Willoughby, General Digby, 171.
 Willoughby, Major Sir John, 48, 54, 67, 93, 128, 133, 140, 155, 156.
 Wilson, Lady Sarah, 349.
 Wilson, Major Alan, in command of Victoria Rangers, 84, 100—sent with small party in pursuit of Lobengula, 102—requests assistance, 103—reinforcement sent, 104—attacked by the Matabele, 105—a hopeless struggle, 107—the fate of the party, 108.
 Wilson, Trooper, treachery of, 100.
 Windley, Lieutenant, 203.
 Wiss, Trooper, 203.
 Witch-doctors, influence over the natives of, 167.
 Wyndham, Mr George, 147.

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